

The Dark Times Cycle

by BenRG

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Summary: The Crew of the Voyager try to solve the problem of getting home, but instead meet up with a terrifying new enemy! Now they must join the war against the invincible evil of the Destroyers!

1. Nightfall

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Star Trek " Voyager

The Dark Times Cycle, Episode 1 - 'Nightfall'

By Ben Russell-Gough

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Species 704 (The Destroyers) are my work.

Continuity note: This story occurs at the end of season 6/the beginning of season 7 and is an ALTERNATE UNIVERSE story. It is in place of UNIMATRIX ZERO, as I think the Borg are over-exposed!

The Crew of the _Voyager_ try to solve the problem of getting home, but instead meet up with a terrifying new enemy! The Destroyers!

This story is presented in the form of a screenplay by way of an experiment. Please tell me what you think!

TEASER

SFX " The _Voyager_ is travelling through space at sub-light with a big blocky starship acting as an escort

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's Log, stardate 53888.9. The _Voyager_ is currently travelling through the space of a species known called the Adronai. Although our hosts have been most courteous at every stage, I do feel that we are not truly welcome. I am currently showing the Captain of our Adronai escort around the ship's facilities as part of our agreement to share our scientific knowledge of this sector.

INT. ASTROMETRICS

While TORRES, SEVEN and KIM work at various consoles, JANEWAY shows an ADRONAI officer around the facility. TUVOK and a SECURITY CREWMAN hover in the background.

JANEWAY

And this is Astrometrics. All the information we gather with our sensors is processed through this facility, creating a map of unparalleled accuracy of the space we travel through.

ADRONAI

Fascinating, Captain. [Sounds bored. When he sees SEVEN, he perks up a bit] And who would you be, my dear?

SEVEN

I am Seven of Nine, Tertiary Adjunct of Unimatrix One Zero.

The ADRONAI officer rears back in surprise at this sudden gush of information.

ADRONAI

A Borg? [Looks at Captain Janeway in some surprise] You let a Borg work in your ship's primary information gathering unit?

JANEWAY

Seven is no longer connected to the Collective, Captain. Over the past few years she has become a trusted part of my crew.

ADRONAI

[Patronisingly, with a sneer] Really, Captain? I must say that your taste in crewmembers has little to recommend it. [He begins to pace around ASTROMETRICS as if he owns it] Everywhere I see non-optimised stations [Rudely shoves KIM aside to gesture at his screen.] No wonder that your people are still so stunted intellectually if you can't even set a simple mapping facility up correctly.

JANEWAY stiffens in outrage and her smile comes close to becoming a snarl. She is obviously trying to keep her temper

JANEWAY

[Trying to maintain a diplomatic tone] Well, Captain, we try. We have come over 15,000 light years so far, and have over 50,000 light years to go in our voyage home.

ADRONAI

[Sneers again] Well, I wish you good luck, my dear. From what you have shown me so far, you will need it. Now, I believe that you are going to show me the Engineering spaces next. I do hope that you keep it at a better level of efficiency, as I don't want your ship breaking up on meâ€¦

The ADRONAI exits the room, followed by a fuming JANEWAY. TUVOK raises his brow before following. There is a long, stony silence in ASTROMETRICS before Harry KIM starts laughing.

KIM

[Still laughing] Oh, man. This is precious. That guy's ego makes its own gravity well. Did you see the Captain's face? Tom tells me that they are ALL like this.

TORRES

[Doing a Klingon slow burn] He'd just better keep clear of me during his 'tour,' that's all I can say.

SEVEN

It is unfortunate that the Captain feels it necessary to indulge the races whose territory we cross. Certainly it reduces our efficiency having to assuage their egos and overcome their paranoid delusions.

TORRES and KIM smile at each other as they listen to SEVEN's analysis of the situation.

TORRES

Well, in the interests of 'efficiency,' Seven, have you found any likely subspace depressions yet?

SEVEN

[Checking sensors] There are several likely spots in an area of generally low subspace integrity by the supernova remnant at 028 mark 111. I will list them in order of subspace distortion in millicochranes.

KIM

I still think this theory is a little, uh, strange, B'Elanna. I mean, using a natural subspace depression as an energy shortcut to building a transwarp gateway? It sounds very dangerous, especially with Subspace so fragile because of Subspace pollution from warp drives.

SEVEN

[Distractedly] There is no such phenomenon, Lieutenant Kim. A regular drop in subspace integrity is part of a natural universal cycle that repeats approximately every 100,000 years.

There is a long leaden pause.

TORRES

[With a touch of acid] I'm sorry Seven, what was that?

SEVEN

[Blinks, shakes her head then faces TORRES, reciting like a student] The integrity of subspace changes in a regular cycle that repeats every 100,217.68 years. The Borg have observed two such cycles. This is the third. Primitive races frequently misinterpret the phenomenon as an artificial effect, due to over-use of warp drives.

KIM and TORRES look at each other. Once again SEVEN turns the face of science upside-down. One of the most pressing problems facing Federation engineering is an illusion.

TORRES

[With elaborate patience] Seven, it would be good in future if you volunteer any relevant information you have on a project.

SEVEN

I apologise, Lieutenant Torres. [Frowns slightly] I cannot explain why I did not think to mention this before.

TORRES shakes her head in disgust and KIM smiles encouragingly. SEVEN pauses for a long moment before continuing. This disturbs her, as she is certainly never 'forgetful' or even 'absent minded.' Suddenly she hears [FX] the voice of the Collective in her head.

SEVEN

[Quietly] Go away.

The voice grows louder. Suddenly there is a discontinuity. Film the next few shots using bright lighting to generate the 'dream-like' quality in DS9's 'Visions of the Prophets'.

SEVEN looks up and sees a massive grey-white starship on the main display. It has two long cylindrical hulls with lots of lumps and bumps. At the rear, the hulls flare out into five long 'spines' that shoot out perpendicular to the hull and glow blue-white. The fronts are blunt with many projectors, sensors and other glowing bits and five 'teeth' sticking forward on either side of the hull.

The voice of the collective grows louder. Seven sees a MONTAGE of nightmare images, the Voyager under heavy attack by similar ships, flame rising from burning cities, a formation of seven ships forming a six-pointed star firing just once. The electric blue beams combine into one bright blast that destroys a world.

SEVEN

[Shouts] No!

TORRES and KIM are looking at her in concern. The images and voices are gone, but she is clearly shaken. Without a word she rushes out of ASTROMETRICS.

FADE.

[New opening to titles] SFX " The _Voyager_ moving at sub light in deep space.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Space: The final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship _Voyager_. Her ongoing mission, to find her way home. To cross a galaxy, carrying the dream of exploration beyond the farthest stars. To boldly go where no one has gone before!

Opening titles

ACT 1

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

JANEWAY is sitting at her desk, nursing a cup of coffee _and_ a headache. [FX] The door chime sounds.

JANEWAY

Enter.

CHAKOTAY enters wearing his patented mischievous smile.

JANEWAY

Go away, Commander. [Smiles slightly at CHAKOTAY's expression] No, I don't mean it, get a coffee and pull up a chair.

CHAKOTAY goes to the replicator.

CHAKOTAY

Tea, blend Chakotay Alpha Zero Five.

[FX] Tea replicated. CHAKOTAY walks over to JANEWAY's desk and sits down. He spends a moment considering the Captain's expression.

CHAKOTAY

I take it that our 'guests' have returned to their ship?

JANEWAY

[Sighs] Yes, and we can proceed without close escort too. To quote Captain D'kargon: "Such a disorderly and ineffective culture does not

need close observation."

CHAKOTAY laughs. JANEWAY gives him a lethal stare.

CHAKOTAY

Well, it seems we have reversed our usual state of affairs. [JANEWAY raises a brow in surprise] Usually we have to put off the curiosity or avarice of younger species like the Kazon. Now we have found a species that does not even think we are worth their time!

JANEWAY

[Grimly] I should be glad we've got off so likely, but the attitude of them, Chakotay. We are ahead in dozens of fields, but we aren't organised to their liking. Hence, we are primitives! [This has obviously offended the good Captain] I swear that I was THIS close [Holds thumb and forefinger and inch apart] from demonstrating how 'primitives' react to condescendingâ€¦

INTERCOM sounds

TORRES (v/o)

Torres to Janeway.

JANEWAY

Go ahead, Lieutenant.

TORRES (v/o)

Captain, you will be glad to hear that Harry and I have found a nearly perfect candidate for our Transwarp experiments. I'd like permission to divert to the co-ordinates and proceed.

JANEWAY

Pass the co-ordinates to Tom, B'Elanna. However, I want to review your procedures again before I give a go-ahead for the experiments.

TORRES (v/o)

Understood, Captain. Torres out.

JANEWAY

[To CHAKOTAY] Well at least something is going right today!

CHAKOTAY smiles slightly and salutes JANEWAY with his cup.

INT. SICKBAY

SEVEN is sitting on the main BIO-BED while THE DOCTOR passes a sensor over her head. She is explaining what has happened to THE DOCTOR

SEVEN

[Continuing] When the experience ended, I determined that I had spent less than point five of a second unconscious. The apparent duration of the incident was much longer, however. As much as sixty seconds.

DOCTOR

[Finishes scanning. Begins to work the controls of his tricorder]. Well, Seven, your experience is not unusual. The humanoid brain processes information several times faster than the senses can gather it. Hallucinatory experiences often occur in such a 'fast time' fashion.

The DOCTOR finishes working and smiles warmly as he checks the results.

DOCTOR

Ah! Excellent. You will be glad to know, Seven, that there is no sign of anything untoward. Your neuro-electric readings are normal, as is your neuro-transmitter activity. There is no indication that your Borg implants have become active.

SEVEN

[Nods warily] That is reassuring news, Doctor. However, I would prefer an explanation of myâ€¦ experience.

DOCTOR

[Shrugs helplessly] I am afraid that I don't have any data at this time, Seven. I will continue to run tests and I will monitor your neuro-electric activity.

The DOCTOR picks up a sensor and attaches it behind SEVEN's left ear.

DOCTOR

This monitor will allow me to examine all your cerebral activity. If you have another experience, it will inform me immediately and record your brain activity. Until then, I recommend that you avoid stress and increase the amount of rest you take every cycle.

SEVEN

Thank you Doctor. Given the critical experiments currently in progress, however, I doubt that I will be able to rest as much as you would prefer.

SEVEN leaves SICKBAY without a backward glance

DOCTOR

[To himself in a huff] Why do I bother give recommendations when no one actually listens to them?

INT. ASTROMETRICS

Lieutenants KIM and TORRES are manning various consoles. SEVEN walks in.

KIM

[To Seven] How are you doing, Seven?

SEVEN

I am functioning within normal parameters, Lieutenant Kim. The Doctor is monitoring my neurological activity and will provide further treatment as soon as he has sufficient diagnostic data.

KIM grins at TORRES at this typically Seven of Nine statement.

TORRES

She's back to normal all right.

SEVEN

[Coldly] Indeed.

SEVEN moves to her preferred console and pulls up a screen of data.

SEVEN

The Voyager is currently holding station near subspace anomaly three-five-nine-seven-tango-yankee-seven.

TORRES

[All business] That's right. We're just about to start our preliminary scans.

SEVEN

That is relevant. I will assist you.

The three tech-heads work in silence for a moment. Seven frowns slightly as she notices something.

SEVEN

Lieutenant Kim. Please confirm that this anomaly is exceedingly regular and symmetrical.

KIM

Yeah, we noticed that on our long-range scans. All the better for B'Elanna's scheme.

SEVEN

There is something about the configuration that I recognise. Something ancient yet importantâ€¦

TORRES and KIM turn to look at SEVEN with nervous

expressions.

TORRES

[Trying to keep her voice steady] What is it Seven?

SEVEN

I am uncertain, Lieutenant Torres. I am feelingâ€¦ [Pauses, frustrated. She has difficulty in expressing her feelings] I am feelingâ€¦ anxiety? I am experiencing a clear fear response to this subspace anomaly, yet I cannot determine the source of those fears.

TORRES walks up to SEVEN and touches her on the shoulder. SEVEN virtually jumps out of her skin and turns to face TORRES. She is pale and is obviously throwing fear pheromones off in all directions.

SEVEN

Iâ€¦ [She shakes her head to clear it] The ship is in danger. We must leave this area immediately.

KIM works his console.

KIM

Sensors aren't picking up anything in this area, Seven. Where is this danger supposed to come from?

SEVEN

Iâ€¦ [Pauses and seems to lose her track] I do not know. This is disturbing. I am no longer experiencing the sensation of danger. Indeed, I cannot explain why I experienced it originally.

TORRES looks genuinely concerned. Once she would have sneered at this show of weakness, but she knows SEVEN too well now to dismiss this out of hand.

TORRES

Is it the Borg?

SEVEN

[Frustrated, almost shouting] I do not know! [Pauses. Her eyes narrow] Yes. The sensations of my earlier hallucinatory experience included the voice of the Collective. The Borg are somehow connected with this anomaly.

KIM

[Grimaces] Kim to Janeway. Captain, we have a problem.

FADE.

ACT 2

SFX " The Voyager holding station. In the distance is the distinctive ring nebula of a supernova remnant.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's Log, Stardate 53890.2. Our investigation into the use of subspace anomalies as a shortcut home has come up against an unexpected problem. Seven of Nine believes that we have stumbled upon some previously unsuspected work of the Borg Collective.

The command crew is meeting to discuss this development.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

JANEWAY is at the head of the table. NEELIX, PARIS, TORRES and KIM are along one side. CHAKOTAY, SEVEN, TUVOK and THE DOCTOR are along the other side. TUVOK is just finishing his comments.

TUVOK

There is no indication of any Borg activity within sensor range. The Adronai assure us that they have not had any Borg incursions into their space for over a century.

JANEWAY

Thank you Mr. Tuvok. [Turns to THE DOCTOR] Doctor, what is your prognosis?

DOCTOR

Seven is in her usual good health, Captain. However, I have been monitoring her since her first blackout in Astrometrics yesterday morning. The results have been quite remarkable.

THE DOCTOR rises and walks to the VIEWSCREEN. It activates with an OKUDAGRAM line graph.

DOCTOR

This diagram shows the recorded activity of Seven's normal neurological activity. [He touches a button and the OKUDAGRAM scrolls to show a later time period] This is Seven's neurological activity during her "anxiety attack" yesterday afternoon. As you can see, there are the normal wave patterns for anxiety, but please notice the Synaptic Establishment activity. [Traces out one remarkably squared-off curve]

KIM

That isn't an analogue curve, it's a digital code. It looks more like a record of computer activity.

DOCTOR

Correct Mr. Kim. This anomaly coincides with a sudden burst of activity in Seven's bio-transceiver implant. [Points out a sudden jump from zero to a series of jagged peaks, then falling back to zero]

SEVEN shifts uncomfortably. Almost subconsciously, she starts to toy with the interface 'spider' implant on the back of her right hand. She is obviously frightened at the thought that the Collective is trying to influence her again.

SEVEN

I have not been aware of any contact with the Collective during my experiences.

JANEWAY

[Kindly] And no one is about to start accusing you, Seven. Mr. Kim? [KIM turns to face her] Is there any indication that the Collective has tried to contact Seven?

KIM

No, Captain. We've checked all the options, including their trying to mask their signals in subspace radiation bursts again. There is nothing.

JANEWAY

So direct contact is out of the question. What other options are there?

DOCTOR

The most unusual aspect of this is that the activity is confined entirely to the Bio-transceiver itself. There has been no increased production of nanoprobes or even increased activity in any other implant.

TORRES

Could it be a malfunction in the implant?

SEVEN

[A little sharply] I dislike the thought of people thinking of me as malfunctioning equipment. [She suddenly pauses and turns to TORRES] My apologies, Lieutenant, I am clearly suffering from the tension.

TORRES smiles thinly and nods to show she isn't offended. SEVEN thinks for a moment.

PARIS

A malfunction is the most obvious possibility, though. Remember that Seven is progressively becoming more human. Could her body be rejecting the implant?

DOCTOR

A fine theory, Mr. Paris, [Suddenly smug] but I would have detected increased T-Cell activity.

SEVEN

I believe I know what is happening, although I remain unsure of why. [When everyone is facing her, she continues] The Bio-Transceiver is primarily a communications device. However, its secondary function is to record all instructions and communications received by a Drone. This activity is consistent with an attempt to download copies of previously received instructions into my brain.

There is a long uncomfortable pause as everyone digests this.

NEELIX

I'm sorry, Seven, but I thought you had perfect recall, or a computerised memory or something. Why would you need a copy of previous instructions?

SEVEN

That is the mystery, Mr. Neelix. I have no other memories of the images and sensations I have had during my experiences. Drones do not have information withheld from their minds, so I cannot explain why I have no previous memories of this matter.

CHAKOTAY

[Thoughtfully] Maybe this is a 'race memory.'

JANEWAY

A what?

CHAKOTAY

A race memory is a theory I heard at a psychological conference I once attended. The basic concept is that we all are born with information about the most fundamental aspects of our species' nature in our subconscious. These are not 'learnt' but 'pre-loaded' through our genetics.

DOCTOR

[A little snide] I am familiar with the theory, Commander. Unfortunately, there is no way memory information could be transmitted genetically. 'Race memory' is a myth that went out with the whole concept of organisms inheriting behavioural attributes.

NEELIX

[Thoughtfully] But Seven isn't entirely organic, is she? [He shoots SEVEN an apologetic glance] She is at least fifteen percent machine and computers CAN come with information hidden away in some part of their structure. It stays hidden until it is needed. Could that be what is happening to her? [Looks around] I'mâ€| not making any sense, am I?

KIM

More than you think.

JANEWAY

This is all very interesting, but I am most concerned whether this is a threat to either Seven or the ship.

TUVOK

[Quietly] If this is indeed a subconscious memory stored in the Bio-Transceiver implant rather than Seven's organic memory, it may be possible to access it through a structured meditation. [Looks at SEVEN] If you are willing?

SEVEN

These experiences are most disturbing. I will be glad to unravel their mystery. [Turns to TORRES] If I can be spared from the current project?

TORRES

There's nothing that needs your special touch right now, Seven. We can spare you until you've sorted outâ€¦ whatever this is.

JANEWAY seems happy with this solution.

JANEWAY

All right Mr. Tuvok, proceed as soon as Seven is ready. Doctor, I want you to continue monitoring Seven's neurological activity. I would like to read your report as soon as possible, Tuvok. Dismissed.

ALL rise and begin to leave the room. KIM pauses by SEVEN.

KIM

[With a smile] Don't let Tuvok tie your superego in knots, Seven.

SEVEN

[Confused] I fail to seeâ€¦ ah, humour. You are trying to alleviate your concern for my safety with a joke. Your concern is noted and appreciated, Mr. Kim.

KIM

[Sighs] Seven, we've known each other for almost two years now. I even kid myself that I am your friend. I think that you should have got to the point where you feel comfortable calling me 'Harry.'

SEVEN

It would be inappropriate to use your given name whilst on duty. [Cocks her head curiously] Do you consider me â€¦ friend?

KIM

Uh, well yes! Of course!

SEVEN

[Smiles slightly] I find such a change in our parameters of association welcome. I would be glad to be your friend Lieutâ€¦
[stops and considers KIM's expression] Harry.

SEVEN leaves. PARIS leans over KIM's shoulder

PARIS

Harry you sly dog, it looks like you're making progress at last.

KIM

[Goes red] Do you have to drag everything through the gutter, Tom?

KIM storms off. PARIS grins mischievously.

INT. TUVOK'S QUARTERS

The lights of the room are on dim and the only source of illumination is a single Vulcan DEVOTIONAL CANDLE sitting between SEVEN and TUVOK. Our two heroes are sitting cross-legged and eyes closed.

TUVOK

Visualise the flame. The flame is your fundamental self. Each part of the flame represents a thought or feeling.

SEVEN

[Dreamy voice] Yes. I can see it.

TUVOK

Focus on the core of the flame. Inside the light is the darkness. This is the mystery of the inner self.

SEVEN

I understand.

TUVOK

Allow the centre of the flame to draw you in. Tell me what you see.

SEVEN

I seeâ€¦ darknessâ€¦

FX â€" Slow zoom on the black core of the candle flame. In the blackness there are images. Initially, they are blurred and indistinct. As we zoom in closer, the voice of the BORG Collective

whispers.

SEVEN (v/o)

[Fearful] I hear the Collective!

TUVOK (v/o)

Do not allow your emotions dominate your perceptions. [Beat] Listen to the message the Collective would give you.

SEVEN (v/o)

[Nervous] I will try.

BORG (v/o)

Danger. Seven of Nine, Tertiary Adjunct to Unimatrix One Zero. Strategic alert.

FX - The images begin to clear. Discontinuityâ€¦ A hole in the stars, a ball of flame shoots from it right at our POINT OF VIEW. The flame metamorphosises intoâ€¦

The vast blue-white spacecraft of SEVEN's first vision looms forward. Others of a similar, almost insectoid design. All have the basic single or double cylindrical hulls with flank spines either equally spaced around the base (single hull) or in two groups of the same number either side (double hull). The spines have a blue glow in the core. The forward facing 'fangs' also have glowing blue cores. Regular bumps and linear plates line the length of the hull

Discontinuityâ€¦ There is a flash of electric-blue energy weapons-fire from between one ship's 'fangs'. A BORG cube is torn apart.

BORG (v/o)

Danger. Do not forget them.

FX - Seven of the largest type (two hulls, a pair of five spines) group into a six-pointed star. They fire 'Death Star'-style. A world explodes.

BORG (v/o)

The invincible enemy.

FX - Discontinuityâ€¦ Inside a BORG ship. Four legged, four armed creatures in blue-white armour charge. They swat DRONES aside like skittles and fire electric-blue pulses from black rifle-like weapons held in their upper limbs.

BORG (v/o)

From beyond the furthest starsâ€¦

SEVEN (v/o)

[Whispers] Noâ€|

FX â€" Highly stylised images of burning cities echoing with screams, the _Voyager_ tumbling away from an electric blue energy pulse and insectoid armies.

Discontinuityâ€| A hole in the stars, a ball of flame shoots from it right at our POINT OF VIEW.

BORG (v/o)

From beyond the darkness in which the stars shine. Species Seven-Zero-Four.

SEVEN (v/o)

[Stronger] Noâ€|

FX - Discontinuityâ€| The _Voyager_'s BRIDGE, smashed to pieces and ablaze. A crying SEVEN is cradling a blooded and dead (?) KIM.

Discontinuityâ€| SEVEN sees herself standing on the steps of a smashed Federation HQ watching legions of the aliens ships scream over a ruined San Francisco.

Discontinuityâ€| The _Voyager_ attacked by a smaller alien vesselâ€| the _Voyager_ explodes.

Discontinuityâ€| A hole in the stars, a ball of flame shoots from it right at our POINT OF VIEW, this time boiling around with a sound of shattering glass and exploding stone as if it has struck the viewerâ€|

BORG (v/o)

The Destroyers.

SEVEN

[Screams] No!

SEVEN jumps to her feet and tumbles gracelessly onto her backside with a grunt of pain. The medical MONITOR behind SEVEN's ear is screaming an alert. TUVOK jumps back to full awareness with a shocked look.

TUVOK

[Dryly] Have you found the information we seek, Seven?

SEVEN

[Shaken] I do not know, Commander. Iâ€| [Pauses to take a calming breath] I must take time to consider what I have seen.

The DOCTOR rushes in at this point and walks over to SEVEN with a concerned expression. SEVEN simply looks down at her hands with a preoccupied frown.

FADE

ACT 3

INT. MESS HALL

SEVEN is standing at the counter, chewing thoughtfully on some hot food (no Leola Root, thank the Maker!)

She looks around at a semi-full MESS HALL. JANEWAY and CHAKOTAY are discussing something in a lively fashion, much to the bemusement of TUVOK. PARIS and TORRES are teasing KIM, trying to get him to put down his PADD and concentrate on his meal.

SEVEN

[Quietly] They are my Collective now.

NEELIX

Lost in thought Seven?

SEVEN looks round at NEELIX. He seems genuinely concerned.

SEVEN

The images I saw in meditation were of destruction and disaster for us all. [Beat, looks down at her hands] I fear that I am going mad.

NEELIX

[Concerned] Why?

SEVEN

[Sighs] Much depends on the next few days. The experiment that Lieutenant Torres proposes may open a way home for my friends. It is my fear that it may be the destruction of us all.

NEELIX

Well, warn them. What's the problem with that?

SEVEN

It is such a nebulous warning, possibly the result of a malfunction or corrupt data— Do I steal their chance for happiness because of my fears? I do not know the way forward. How can I make this choice?

NEELIX

Seven, they are your friends. They trust you. If you genuinely believe that there is something in this warning from your subconscious, then tell them. Even if it is exaggerated or a false alarm, they will still appreciate you. You will still be their friend for all your faults. Your fallibility and your making paradoxical

choices are what make you Human.

SEVEN

[Wryly] I could see that as an insult.

NEELIX

[Delighted] See? A joke! You are getting more Human every day, Seven.

SEVEN smiles. She nods to NEELIX and leaves the MESS HALL.

INT. _VOYAGER_ CORRIDOR

SEVEN walks along the corridor, passing several CREWMEN.

NAOMI

Hello, Seven.

SEVEN turns to see NAOMI standing there, grinning up at her with her typical insolent good humour.

SEVEN

[Dryly] Naomi Wildman.

NAOMI

How are you doing Seven? My Mom was saying you've been sick!

SEVEN

I amâ€¦ somewhat recovered, Naomi. Although the Doctor still insists on monitoring my vital signs.

SEVEN moves her head to show the SENSOR attached behind her ear.

NAOMI

[Suitably impressed] Ooh, I bet that tickles!

SEVEN

[Dryly] Ticklesâ€¦ I do not believe soâ€¦

NAOMI

[Cocks her head. She seems to be saying to SEVEN "you know better than to try that with _me_"] Well, I'm glad you are feeling better. Can you visit me to play a game of Dom Jot this evening?

SEVEN

Unfortunately, I cannot. I have to assist with several experiments

this evening.

NAOMI

[Grunt] Typical! Well, that's what you get for being good at everything! [Giggles at the thought] Well, some other time, Seven? [Grins engagingly] I'm sure I can trust you to get things done so you have free time.

NAOMI skips off down the hall.

SEVEN

[Thoughtfully] Trust. A curious concept.

With a sudden sense of determination, SEVEN carries on down the CORRIDOR.

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

SEVEN and TORRES are sitting in front of JANEWAY's desk.

JANEWAY

[Obviously finishing her comments] There are no obvious flaws in your procedures, B'Elanna, so you can proceed with the experiments. [Sees SEVEN's preoccupied expression]. Yes, Seven, you have a comment to make?

SEVEN

Yes, Captain. [Pauses, gathering her thoughts] I do not make this comment lightly, Captain. I agree with Lieutenant Torres that this study remains the _Voyager_'s best hope for finding a short cut to the Alpha Quadrant. However, my own investigations into my recent experiences have revealed that there may be an unsuspected danger either in the experiment or in this area of space.

JANEWAY

[Shoots TORRES a surprised look] What kind of danger?

SEVEN

[Rueful] I cannot provide many details, Captain, as I do not have them. During my structured meditation, I experienced a detailed sensory hallucination that referred directly to a 'Species 704,' who successfully resisted assimilation and nearly devastated the Collective several millennia ago.

TORRES

[Wry] Who or what are 'Species 704,' Seven?

SEVEN

Again, I have no details, Lieutenant. My experience only confirmed that they had access to military capabilities broadly equivalent to

Species 8472 and that their first appearance is somehow related either to the use of subspace depressions for movement or to this region of space. [To JANEWAY] I am sorry that I cannot offer any more precise data, Captain.

TORRES

I'm sorry, Seven, but where is the usual encyclopaedic knowledge of all things Borg? If the Collective gave this species a number, there should be millions of quads of data on them.

SEVEN

Indeed, there should. In this case, however, there is not. In fact, there is no reference in Borg records to any 'Species 704.' This anomaly is incomprehensible.

TORRES draws in a breath but JANEWAY cuts her off before she can make a typically acid comment.

JANEWAY

I have read Tuvok's report on the structured meditation, Seven. According to him, the images you saw were so traumatic that they caused you to snap out of the trance-state spontaneously. He adds that this is virtually unheard of in Vulcan meditation.

SEVEN

The images included very specific imaginings of the destruction of the Voyager and the conquest of the Alpha Quadrant. The images of the death of the crew were vivid. They were mostâ€¦ disturbing.

TORRES

Captain, Harry has been over the sensor readings every way in the book. Hell, he has even created some new ways and there is NO indication of ANY potential threat related to this area. [Turns to SEVEN] I don't want to insult you, Seven, but there is simply NO physical proof to back up this warning. I am sure it was a very frightening nightmare, but I don't see ANY reason to delay our experiment!

SEVEN bristles a little at this and is about to retort. Janeway, who has been sipping meditatively at her coffee, breaks in before there is any further escalation.

JANEWAY

I am afraid B'Elanna is right, Seven. [TORRES smirks. JANEWAY gives her a 'death stare'] Nonetheless, I am not willing to disregard a considered warning of potential danger. During all stages of the experiment, we will keep checking all sensor readings. If there is anything, anything at all, to indicate a threat to this ship, we will desist at once and leave the area.

TORRES

[Disbelieving] Captainâ€¦!

JANEWAY

My decision is final, Lieutenant. [Waits for TORRES to subside] I have conferred with Tuvok, Chakotay and The Doctor. They all agree that theseâ€¦ 'visions' are not related to any kind of illness, malfunction or malign telepathic influence. There may be no physical proof, but I am not going to ignore such a vivid experience, especially from such a reliable source. [Shoots SEVEN a little smile]

JANEWAY rises and gestures the other two women to leave the room with her.

JANEWAY

Seven, I want you on the bridge to help monitor the situation. If you have any more 'premonitions', I want you to tell me immediately.

SEVEN

Understood, Captain.

JANEWAY, SEVEN and TORRES leave the READY ROOM

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY, SEVEN, and TORRES are entering from the READY ROOM.

TORRES

Captain, I really could use Seven's help in Engineering. [Pleading slightly] Surely she could monitor the situation from there?

JANEWAY

She could, but I prefer to have her immediately to hand, B'Elanna. She will be more at the centre of things here.

SEVEN

[To TORRES] I shall endeavour to operate at peak efficiency despite my absence from engineering.

TORRES grunts sceptically and scowls. She walks towards the TURBOLIFT. As she passes PARIS, he offers her a wink. This makes her a little happier and she leaves the BRIDGE without a ferocious scowl.

SEVEN

[To JANEWAY, quietly] Thank you for believing in me, Captain.

JANEWAY

[Quietly, with a smile] Trust is a part of friendship, Seven. [More

loudly] Stations, people. We're doing this one by the book.

FADE

ACT 4

F/X The _Voyager _still hovers before the typical supernova remnant.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's Log, Stardate 53898.1. We are preparing to perform our first experiments at enlarging and controlling a subspace depression. The best case scenario is for a flood of data that will help us create super-efficient quantum slipstreams that will bring us home decades earlier than our wildest expectations. The very worst case scenarioâ€¦ Well, given Seven of Nine's clear visionsâ€¦ I don't want to try to imagine what that could beâ€¦

INT. BRIDGE. The following crew is present. PARIS, TUVOK and KIM are at their stations. CHAKOTAY is looking at the central console. SEVEN is at the bridge 'horseshoe' console. JANEWAY is standing behind Lt. J. G. Samantha WILDMAN at the science station. An unnamed CREWMAN is at the Engineering console and another is behind SEVEN at the Ships' Operations wall display.

TORRES (v/o)

Engineering to Bridge. Seven, is the deflector dish charged and ready?

SEVEN

The dish is charged Lieutenant, I am ready to monitor feed-back along the subspace pulse.

JANEWAY is obviously satisfied at whatever she has seen on WILDMAN's console. She walks to stage centre and sits down in her chair.

JANEWAY

Status report, Commander?

CHAKOTAY

All decks and departments report ready, Captain.

JANEWAY nods decisively. She seems tense.

JANEWAY

Tuvok, go to Yellow Alert. [SOUNDS - Yellow Alert siren, yellow tracer lights and buzzer] Mr. Kim, keep an eye on the sensors. Mr. Paris, keep an eye on the space conditions, if navigation gets hazardous, back us off. Lieutenant Torres?

INT. MAIN ENGINEERING

TORRES is at her console. The ENGINEERING CREW all stand at their stations in tense anticipation.

TORRES

Torres here, Captain.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Commence the first low-power subspace pulse when ready, B'Elanna.

TORRES

Aye, Captain. [Turns to CREW] Alright people, look sharp.

There is a BLEEP. TORRES looks down and sees an E-MAIL on her display from PARIS: "They say that 'there are old engineers and bold engineers but no old and bold engineers.' The ones who say that have never met you, love." TORRES grins and enters a series of commands.

TORRES

As Paris says, let's rock!

F/X " A huge beam of blue-white light shoots out of the VOYAGER's main deflector. It hits some invisible barrier and spreads out in a pretty light show.

INT. BRIDGE. Everyone is poring over the results of this first experiment.

SEVEN

Seven to Lieutenant Torres. The beam returns are normal. However, the impact point is marginally off target. Modify the beam at x plus 1.0055 degrees, y minus 0.005 degrees.

TORRES (v/o)

[Irritated] I see it, Seven. [Beat] Is this any better?

SEVEN

[Frowns] The error factor is now less than one in one thousand. That is sufficient.

JANEWAY grins at CHAKOTAY as she hears the exchange. SEVEN makes a few more adjustments.

SEVEN

[To JANEWAY] The beam is now calibrated, Captain. We may proceed with the tests on enlarging the depression.

JANEWAY looks at the centre console and looks up to reply to SEVEN. Whatever she was about to say is now lost to history.

KIM

[Alarmed] Captain! I'm reading a transwarp egress at 133 mark 027.
It's a Borg Cruiser-class Sphere!

JANEWAY

Red alert!

LIGHTS and SOUND " Lights dim, red tracer lights begin to shine and the siren begins to hoot.

JANEWAY

B'Elanna, cut off the beam. Tuvok, maximum power to shields. Stand by all weapons!

There is ordered chaos as the BRIDGE CREW quickly performs the evolution to battle stations. It is something of which, unfortunately, they have too much practice.

KIM

The Borg vessel is on a heading directly for the subspace depression, Captain. [Beat] They have scanned us, but don't seem to be taking much notice. [SOUNDS " HAILING SIGNAL] They're hailing us.

JANEWAY

I can guess what this is going to be about. Let's hear it anyway, Lieutenant.

VIEWSCREEN " The Borg Sphere swooping across the screen, the camera tracking it. There is a bleep and the view switches to the typical interior of a BORG vessel (matte painting). The BORG address the crew.

BORG

We are the Borg. You have intruded onto our territorial space. You will withdraw, immediately, or we will annihilate your ship. Resistance is futile.

JANEWAY

[Nonplussed, to CHAKOTAY] Well that was unexpected. [To BORG] This is Captain Katherine Janeway of the Federation starship Voyager. We mean you no harm. We are simply performing some scientific experiments.

BORG

Your intentions are irrelevant. You will comply with our demands or we will annihilate you. [Signal cuts off. VIEWSCREEN shows to the SPHERE, now taking up station between the _Voyager _and the subspace depression]

JANEWAY

[Turns to crew] Suggestions or comments, people?

TUVOK

The appearance of a Borg Cruiser is most unusual, Captain. As you know, they are designed for defensive patrols within Borg space, not assimilation. They are heavily armed, but relatively lightly crewed. I do not believe that we are their target.

CHAKOTAY

Agreed, they want us out of the way, Captain. The question is why?

PARIS

[Concerned] I say the question is "Why are we still here when the Borg have asked us to leave so nicely?"

JANEWAY gives PARIS her 'death glare.' PARIS looks back innocently and KIM covers a smile.

KIM

The Borg are scanning the subspace depression with full sensors, Captain. Their shields are at maximum power and their weapons are running hot.

JANEWAY

Are they targeting us?

TUVOK

Negative, Captain. [Does the eyebrow trick] Indeed, the Borg seem to be ignoring us.

SEVEN

The Collective always ignores vessels that are not of immediate interest.

JANEWAY

I find that vaguely insulting.

WILDMAN

Captain, the anomaly!

Everyone swings around to face the VIEWSCREEN.

VIEWSCREEN " F/X " The ANOMALY is now visible as a blue-green tinged depression against the stars darkening towards the centre. Everyone snaps into action.

INT. BRIDGE

SEVEN is working at her console. JANEWAY is still in her chair, looking up at her.

SEVEN

Captain, the depression is deepening. Subspace distortion is a 5,250 cochranes and still rising.

The ship suddenly begins to shudder.

WILDMAN

Captain, there is an awful lot of subspace disruption coming from the anomaly. It's getting worse by the second.

JANEWAY

Tom, pull us back 20,000 kilometres.

PARIS

Yes Ma'am!

PARIS works his console, but nothing happens, except the quality of the ship's shuddering changes.

PARIS

This crazy subspace distortion is affecting our impulse engines, Captain. It's almost as if the engines can't 'grip' space anymore. [Looks up] B'Elanna, can you give me more power?

TORRES (v/o)

I'll try Tom. I've got a few tricks that may improve impulse drive performance in this environment, too.

JANEWAY

Try them, Lieutenant. [Turns to SEVEN] What is the situation, Seven?

SEVEN does not seem to hear. Her normally pale face has gone ghostly white and she is staring at the anomaly on the VIEWSCREEN. Her expression is blank with pure terror.

JANEWAY

[Firmly] Seven! Snap out of it!

SEVEN

[Shakes her head] I'm sorry, Captain. The subspace depression is now showing a distortion of over 100 kilocochranes. [Examines readings with a frown] The readings are similar to the proposed subspace tunnel that was the ultimate goal of our experiments. However, they are thousands of times more powerful.

JANEWAY

[Hopeless and quiet] B'Elannaâ€|?

INT. ENGINEERING

TORRES is working desperately at her console to increase the power to the impulse engines and improve their performance. She seems annoyed that everything is suddenly her fault.

TORRES

Not our doing, Captain. We only used our scanning-intensity beam. Anyway, even if we had used a full-power subspace beam, it would not have created a result even a hundredth of the power of the anomaly.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Could the scanning beam have tripped off this effect?

TORRES

I don't see how.

TORRES moves to another console. She shoves VORIK aside and makes a few adjustments. It is obviously ineffective as she hits the console in frustration and moves back to her own station.

TORRES

Besides, the numbers are all wrong, Captain. These frequency readings are all inverted. It is almost as if something were coming through from the other side!

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY looks at CHAKOTAY in disbelief. The big Indian's jaw is slack with disbelief.

CHAKOTAY

Something coming through from the other sideâ€|?

JANEWAY looks at SEVEN. Pure terror has almost paralysed the young woman. She is standing stiffly and holding the console almost hard enough to start to deform its structure.

WILDMAN

Captain, the subspace distortion is going off the top of the scale. Distortion is now greater than a megacochrane. I've never even seen a theoretical description of such conditions.

TUVOK

The Borg Sphere is over-charging its weapons systems.

JANEWAY

Who are they targeting?

TUVOK

[Surprised] They are targeting the anomaly.

F/X " The Borg SPHERE fires several emerald-white torpedoes into the anomaly. They flash forward and are torn apart by the massive distortion fields.

INT. BRIDGE

KIM is checking his console, wearing an amazed expression.

KIM

[Amazed] Captain, the Borg are sending an all-frequency distress signal!

Before JANEWAY can react to that, SEVEN suddenly cuts in. Her voice is rough with fear.

SEVEN

Captain, we have to get out of here! NOW!

JANEWAY has already decided on this. Whatever it is that could get a _Borg_ ship sending distress signals, she has no desire to meet it.

JANEWAY

Get us out of here, Mr. Paris. Maximum Warp.

PARIS works his console. Nothing is happening.

JANEWAY

Engineering we need more power!

The shuddering of the ship grows worse.

JANEWAY

B'Elanna, we are not going anywhere! Boost the power levels to maximum tolerance!

INT. ENGINEERING

The WARP CORE is flashing and flaring brightly. TORRES and an ENSIGN look on aghast. The _Voyager_ is obviously at maximum power and nothing is happening.

INT. BRIDGE

PARIS

It's no good, Captain; our warp field isn't generating any propulsive power!

JANEWAY

Engineering, report!

TORRES (v/o)

Captain, the Warp Core is at 115% output now and I don't like the look of the temperature of our coolant. I can't give you any more power!

WILDMAN

[Hysterical] Oh my god!

EVERYONE looks at the VIEWSCREEN.

F/X - The centre of the anomaly seems to be stretching away from normal space as if something were pulling it. It now looks like water racing down glowing blue-green hole. At the very 'bottom,' there is a bright blue-white glow. Suddenly there is a mighty flare of light from deep within. A spear of energy is sent flaring out from the centre, deep out into space. A vivid blue-white ring shoots away from the perimeter of the anomaly.

INT. BRIDGE

The shock wave throws everyone about.

F/X - As the flare dies away, there is now a deep blue-white vortex leading into a pitch black hole. It is very like the Babylon 5 exit jump point effect. Occasionally, the vortex flares as a ring of energy races up from deep within.

INT. BRIDGE

KIM

[Awed] It's an artificial wormhole! I've never seen these power readings before! It could link us to a point billions of light years from here!

WILDMAN

Captain, I'm reading six objects emerging from the. Well, from the 'super-wormhole,' or whatever it is. They are definitely artificial.

F/X " The six objects are identical and are travelling along the perimeter of the vortex. When they reach the event horizon, they stop. They are trapezoid-shaped with four long 'arms' that hang backwards from each corner. As we watch, the trapezoids move so that their largest face points out of the wormhole. Two arms attached to the long end move to run along the rim of the vortex, while the two from the narrow end lie parallel to the vortex's walls, pointing towards its black heart. A strong blue-white glow appears from long vents along the length of the arms.

The Borg SPHERE opens fire with everything it's got: Repulsor beams, disruptors, torpedoes and cutting beams. The objects' shields absorb everything without even a flicker of strain.

INT. Bridge

PARIS is still fighting the helm as TUVOK examines his console.

TUVOK

The Borg are putting more power into their distress call, Captain. They have fired upon the unidentified artefacts, but their weapons have no visible effect.

PARIS

[Frustrated] Captain, I still can't make any headway with either Warp or Impulse engines. This distortion field is so scrambling the structure of subspace that our generators can't affect it. It's like trying to swim up a waterfall. Our thrusters are the only propulsion system not affected, and they are barely strong enough to keep us from falling down the gravity well of that thing!

JANEWAY

Keep at it, Tom. [She looks at CHAKOTAY. He is using the centre console to co-ordinate some function. His expression is grim] If anyone has any ideas, now is the time.

KIM

If the anomaly and the distortion are somehow related, then we have to generate a powerful subspace pulse, something so big that it drowns out everything else. If that happens, we'll have a window of a few seconds to get clear.

JANEWAY

How big a pulse are we looking at, Harry?

KIM

Too big, Captain. [His editorialising does obviously not impress JANEWAY] Equivalent to the simultaneous detonation of about a thousand photon torpedoes. The Detonation of our warp core might just be powerful enough.

That is obviously not an option, as JANEWAY's expression makes quite clear.

TUVOK

Captain, I believe that this wormhole is, indeed, intended to function as an intergalactic conduit. [Quirks an eyebrow] Interesting. The six vessels appear to be generating some form of resonant subspace field that is stabilising this end of the wormhole. [Looks at JANEWAY] While the technology that makes this possible is beyond our ability to reproduce, it is a most efficient way to stabilise such a construct using lower power levels.

Then, as if to prove TUVOK's point, WILDMAN checks her readings and rears back in shock.

WILDMAN

I'm reading another ship coming through the wormhole, Captain. It is much bigger than those six stabilising generators. I mean much bigger. At least 2 kilometres in length and well over 250 million metric tonnes mass.

JANEWAY

[Nearly a whisper] On screen, Mr. Kim.

SEVEN

[Terrified] Captain, we MUST leave this area! I mean it; this may be our last chance!

EVERYONE's attention is again fixed on the VIEWSCREEN as the new contact WILDMAN detected begins to emerge.

F/X - We see the Voyager, the warp pylons raised and glowing brightly as the ship struggles to get free of the subspace distortion. The POV rotates past the Borg ship, which has ceased firing for the time being to the wormhole.

Beyond the stabilising generators, the blue-white vortex flows off into infinity, a deep well of black. The occasional power surge still races along its length like spirals of light. From the very centre, a huge object rolls forward that looks like two long, thin cylinders with various sharp projections connected side by side. NOTE - for the first time we get the scale of the anomaly. From WILDMAN's estimates, it is obvious that the mouth of the wormhole is over 2 miles in diameter.

New POV, looking virtually across the mouth of the wormhole as IT emerges. First are ten forward-facing 'blades,' five each side of the cylindrical hull, which taper forward to a blunt end at their fronts. The teeth have flush vents that glow with the same blue light as the generators' 'arms.'

The hull continues, melding smoothly into two pairs of five smooth 'booms,' each pair spaced equally around the circumference of one of the egg-shaped forward hulls. More blue light glows from various spots and from in between the booms. The booms meld once more into a the two cylindrical hulls that curve smoothly towards the join of the two hulls, ending with two pairs of four claw-like protrusions on the outward-facing surface that glow with the familiar orange-red or impulse power.

The mighty ship slips clear of the wormhole and hovers for a moment, then ten long, graceful spines swing away from the outer hull, five on each outward-facing side of the rear hulls, creating what look like two fans, or possibly something like a solar sailing ship's masts. These spines end with short, vicious-looking sharp forward-pointing ends. The spines have long vents along their length. They begin to glow with the same blue-white power.

The Borg SPHERE opens fire once again. The ship's shields, without a flicker, deflect the blasts. Blasts powerful enough to kill a Federation starship with one shot. It is, of course, the ship from SEVEN's vision.

INT. BRIDGE

SEVEN

[Verging on the hysterical by now. It makes her voice very quiet, very young] It's too late

TUVOK

I am reading a massive power surge from the alien vessel.

F/X - From in between the ten 'blades,' there comes a powerful, pencil-thin beam of blue-white light. The shot reaches out and smashes right into the very centre of the SPHERE. The SPHERE's running lights go out. What looks like a distortion wave spreads out from the impact point and flows along its hull, causing it to ripple like a wave, until it meets again at the far side of the hull. Then the SPHERE explodes with a massive yellow-white explosion. There is very little wreckage. From impact to explosion, it is all over in less than a tenth of a second.

INT. BRIDGE

KIM is sweating, staring at his rear wall displays.

KIM

Tom, the subspace distortion

PARIS

I see it, Harry!

F/X - PARIS does not waste time with unnecessary manoeuvres. The VOYAGER swoops forward, right over the alien still poised at the entry to the wormhole, and leaps to high warp. Even though the manoeuvre is fast, it is not fast enough. As the VOYAGER races past, the alien is able to get in one shot. It is not a clean hit, indeed it is only a glancing blow, but it still is almost enough.

INT. BRIDGE

The entire crew is thrown forward by a tremendous concussion. TUVOK's rear wall displays explode with a bright white flash, throwing him over his console to the deck. The CREWMAN at the Ship's Status display is also thrown to the deck beside SEVEN.

Bits of the Tactical console rain down and fire burns in the shattered remains. Several overhead ODN trunks in the same area are ruptured and fibre-optic cables create a strangely art-deco background to the fire. The Ship's Status display begins to flicker

JANEWAY

Trauma Team to the Bridge! I want a full damage report!

CHAKOTAY checks the centre console.

CHAKOTAY

My god!

JANEWAY

What?

CHAKOTAY

That was just a near miss, Captain! A single glancing blow and it still nearly knocked out our shields! Our rear shields are down 67% and our forward shields are down 25%.

There is concussion damage to all decks with sections far to the aft. We will have to evacuate the main shuttlebay, the main doors are shattered and the mag shield generator has been knocked out! We are reading all kinds of damage to the ship's systems, especially tactical and drive systems.

JANEWAY is amazed and horrified. The medical team arrives and goes to TUVOK and the CREWMAN. JANEWAY turns to them.

JANEWAY

How are they? [She means, 'How is TUVOK,' of course]

MEDIC

They are both suffering from concussion, lacerations and severe plasma burns, Ma'am. We'll get them to sickbay.

SEVEN seems to be recovered from her terrified paralysis. She has an extinguisher and puts out the fire in the wreckage of the Tactical station. She then turns back to her console and touches a few controls.

Two CREWMEN exit the lift and move to assist in repairing the damaged stations.

SEVEN

Captain, I have re-routed Tactical to my console.

JANEWAY

[Wry] Good to have you back, Seven. All right, status report.

PARIS

We are stable at Warp 6 on a course radially away from the wormhole, Captain. Now we are clear, the drive systems are functioning normally.

SEVEN

All weapon systems except Phaser Banks Ten through Thirteen are operational. I have re-enforced the rear shields with power from our forward shields, but I am unable to increase general shield power above 50% of nominal.

TORRES (v/o)

We're still picking up the pieces down here, Bridge. There are no serious problems I can see, but I'll have to get back to you.

KIM

[Tense] Captain, we are being pursued. The alien vessel has just come into rear sensor range. They are at Warp 8 and accelerating.

JANEWAY's jaw goes all square and she seems grim.

JANEWAY

What are our chances, Seven?

SEVEN

[Calmly, but tense too now it is clear it is not over] Very slim, Captain. Our damaged shields could not protect us against another attack. Even if all systems were nominal, we would stand little chance against a Species 704 warship.

JANEWAY

[Quiet] You are certain it is them?

SEVEN

[Grim] I am certain, Captain.

JANEWAY

So, we're in no condition for another confrontation. All right, Tom. Take us up to maximum warp.

PARIS

Yes, Ma'am [Touches some controls] Warp 7. Warp 8. Warp 8.5

KIM

[Urgent] Captain, the alien vessel is already at Warp 9 and it is still accelerating.

JANEWAY

[Urgent] Tom, when I said 'maximum warp' I meant it!

PARIS

[Concerned] She seems a little sluggish, Captain. [Checks a display] It looks like we took a little more damage to our warp drives than we thought. We're at Warp 9.2 now.

TORRES (v/o)

Captain, how much warp power do you think you are going to need?

INT. ENGINEERING

The place has seen better days. There are damage control parties and medical teams all over. The WARP CORE seems undamaged, but that could be deceiving. TORRES and CAREY are both standing at the main console, examining the power flow read outs.

JANEWAY (v/o)

How much can you give me, B'Elanna?

TORRES

Not as much as I would like, Ma'am. The concussion of that near miss has damaged both warp plasma feeds. We have the leak under control now, but if we increase the plasma pressure too much, they'll rupture.

JANEWAY (v/o)

You mean we could loose warp speed?

TORRES

I mean that we could loose most of the ship aft of Section 18, Captain.

JANEWAY (v/o)

[Grim] Well I'd rather blow up than be vaporised, B'Elanna. Take it as far as she can handle, then give me an extra ten-percent on top of that.

TORRES

I'll do my best, Captain. Try to keep the ride smooth.

JANEWAY (v/o)

No promises, Lieutenant. Janeway out.

TORRES

[To Carey, with a little shake of her head] I don't know if we are going to make it this time, Joe.

An ENGINEERING CREWMAN shouts to TORRES from the other side of the Core. Torres runs to see the problem, leaving Carey at the main console.

INT. BRIDGE

PARIS is visibly sweating as he tries to coax more power from the damaged starship. JANEWAY is at the aft section, walking between KIM and SEVEN, looking grim.

PARIS

We're at Warp 9.6, Captain.

JANEWAY

Keep pouring it on, Tom.

PARIS

Yes, Ma'am. All right, we're at Warp 9.8â€¦ Warp 9.9. That's our maximum rated speed, Captain. The core will SCRAM automatically after 12 hours tops.

KIM

[Grim] Captain, the alien vessel is already at Warp 9.95 and they are still accelerating. There is no indication that their acceleration curve is levelling off.

SEVEN

They will intercept us in thirty minutes at current rates of acceleration.

JANEWAY

[Frustrated] Chief Engineer, we need _more speed_!

TORRES (v/o)

I'm giving it all we've got left, Captain.

There is a sudden sound like a loud bang over the INTERCOM and TORRES is cut off.

JANEWAY

Torres, what's happening? Torres? [Louder] B'Elanna?

TORRES (v/o)

[Urgent] We've just lost one of our primary coolant pumps, Captain. The engines will rip themselves apart at this rate! The plasma conduits are ready to burst!

JANEWAY

Keep on top of it, B'Elanna! Hold those conduits together with your bare hands if you have to, but keep those warp factors coming!

TORRES (v/o)

[Exhausted] I'll do my best, Ma'am.

JANEWAY walks to the lower level and stands next to
PARIS

JANEWAY

How are we doing, Tom?

PARIS

We're at warp 9.92, and I really don't like the look of those drive stress dynamics. [Turns to JANEWAY] I don't think we can take her any higher without shedding our nacelles.

KIM

[Slightly shrill] The alien vessel is at Warp 9.99 and _still_ accelerating!

SEVEN

Interception in 8 minutes, maximum, Captain.

JANEWAY

On screen.

VIEWSCREEN - F/X - The alien warship is in the very centre of the screen. Small right now, but getting bigger _very_ quickly.

JANEWAY

Prepare to fire aft torpedoes. Full spread, pattern gamma.

SEVEN

Weapons armed, locked on and ready to fire.

JANEWAY

There's one last chance to stop this. Mr. Kim, open hailing frequencies.

SEVEN

[Bold] I find it highly unlikely that this course will benefit us. Species 704 has no reason to open communications at this time.

JANEWAY

[Quiet and firm] I didn't ask you, Seven. [Now sounds angry] Despite your preconceived notions, these people may not be conquest-obsessed berserkers.

SEVEN straightens at her post, reacting as if she has just been slapped.

SOUNDS - Hailing frequencies.

KIM

Hailing frequencies open

JANEWAY

This is Captain Katherine Janeway of the United Federation of Planets starship Voyager to unidentified vessel in pursuit. We are a peaceful vessel on a mission of exploration and wish to avoid hostilities. May we discuss this matter openly?

There is a long pause. There is no reply.

JANEWAY

We are no part of the Borg Collective and have no knowledge of any grievances you may have against cultures in the area of space. Can we at least attempt to avoid needless bloodshed?

Still there is no reply.

KIM

They're listening, Captain, they're just not replying.

JANEWAY

[Frustrated, maybe a little desperate] Alien vessel; please state your intentions

SEVEN

Captain, they are scanning us.

F/X - A distortion wave suddenly flashes across the BRIDGE. EVERYONE looks around in disorientation.

SEVEN

It was a full scan. [Beat] Captain, the Species 704 vessel has obtained a missile targeting lock. We will come under attack at any time.

CHAKOTAY

[Grim] They have stated their intentions, all right.

JANEWAY seems defeated. She slumps down into her chair before speaking again.

JANEWAY

Fire torpedoes.

SEVEN responds immediately, touching a single control.

F/X - Three torpedoes spit from both of the Voyager's rear tubes and flash away through space, rapidly forming a five-pointed star.

INT. BRIDGE

SEVEN at her station.

SEVEN

Torpedoes away. Weapons running straight, hot and normal.

F/X - The weapons reach the alien warship and detonate against their shields. NOTE - It is a strangely muted detonation, almost as if the torpedoes were not fully armed.

JANEWAY

[Amazed] Seven?

SEVEN

[Checks console] The torpedoes functioned normally, but seemed to disintegrate on impact against their shields. [Amazed] It is almost as if their molecular structure was disrupted. The antimatter seemed to simplyâ€¦ vanish, as if it aged a million years in an instant. There was only a kinetic impact and their shields are undamaged. The attack was ineffective.

JANEWAY

[Not fazed] Reload and fire again. Set the torpedoes to detonate a few metres short of their shields. We'll see if we can knock them down.

SEVEN does not hesitate for a second. She performs the required functions and launches the reprogrammed second barrage.

VIEWSCREEN - F/X - We see the alien warship. The second five pointed star of torpedoes flashes into view and detonate minutely short of its shields. Six enormous red fireballs blossom out and the alien disappears for a second.

PARIS

[Slight smirk] Eat that, buddy.

VIEWSCREEN - F/X - The alien warship emerges untouched. Several Starfleet jaws hit the deck.

SEVEN

The alien shields somehow de-phased all incident energy from the torpedo detonations, reducing the weapons' effectiveness by over 99%. Sensors detected a momentary point-zero- one percent loss of power in the alien shields.

KIM

[Whispers] That's impossible!

JANEWAY

Time to interception?

SEVEN

They will be at point-blank range in 150 seconds, Captain. [Beat, a look of inspiration] Captain, I suggest that we alter course to 233 mark 107. This will take us into the shock front of the supernova remnant and reduce the effectiveness of their sensors.

CHAKOTAY

It will also render most of our sensor systems useless, Seven. We can't fight blind.

SEVEN

[Firm] I do not believe that we can fight them at all, at present.

JANEWAY considers SEVEN's expression closely. The younger woman radiates certainty and it is enough. The Captain nods decisively.

JANEWAY

You heard the lady, Tom, new heading 233 mark 107, maintain maximum warp.

PARIS

Aye aye, Captain!

The ship begins to shudder

JANEWAY

Engineering, what is happening down there?

TORRES (v/o)

I'm sorry Captain, but I can't give you much more. The warp core is overheating and the plasma conduits are shaking themselves apart.

JANEWAY

[Grim] I will only need another three minutes, B'Elanna, one way or another.

TORRES (v/o)

[Horrified] Yes, Ma'am!

F/X " Small clumps of nebulosity and patterns of distortion from the supernova remnant fill our view. The _Voyager _races past, deeper into the remnant at full power. After a few seconds, with the Voyager dwindling into the distance, the alien ship also races past with an unearthly banshee-like scream.

INT. BRIDGE

KIM

Captain, the hostile vessel somehow turned inside our manoeuvre!
Intercept now in ninety seconds!

JANEWAY

I don't understand why they haven't fired yet.

CHAKOTAY

[Bitter] They probably want to gloat. You know, see the looks of
terror on our faces before they finish us!

SEVEN

Unlikely, Commander. It is more probable that Species 704 is
deliberately prolonging this engagement to determine our strengths,
weaknesses and tactical behaviour. We are, after all, an unfamiliar
culture to them.

F/X " The alien ship at high warp. It fires a single blue-white
torpedo, a little like a quantum torpedo in appearance but brighter.
Our POV tracks the torpedo as it races past towards the distant
Voyager.

INT. BRIDGE

SEVEN's console begins to beep loudly. Seven freezes for a second
before reporting.

SEVEN

Species 704 has opened fire. A single missile is approaching at
approximately Warp 9.999. Impact in 30 seconds.

VIEWSCREEN " F/X " The alien torpedo is moving fast towards the
bottom of the screen.

SEVEN

Sensors indicate that the weapon has some form of artificial
singularity for a warhead.

JANEWAY's jaw drops open.

JANEWAY

Now that is what I call overkill. Mr. Kim, begin jamming. Mr. Paris,
commence evasive!

SEVEN

[Interrupts] That will be useless, Captain. [Excited] I can defeat
this attack but I must have total computer control!

KIM

Impact in fifteen seconds. [Beat] Jamming has no effect; weapon is
still locked on and homing. Impact in ten seconds!

JANEWAY

Do it Seven. [To INTERCOM] All hands, brace for impact!

SEVEN extends her ASSIMILATION TUBULES, which punch into her console. She closes her eyes and concentrates on becoming one with the ship's computer systems.

KIM

Impact in five seconds. Fourâ€| threeâ€| twoâ€| Torpedo impactâ€| NOW!

F/X â€" There is a massive blue-white explosion that sends the _VOYAGER_ tumbling end over end. The starship's lights go out and glowing red deuterium fuel begins to spill from the ship's bussard ram-scoops.

INT. BRIDGE

The explosion sends EVERYONE flying about the compartment. Several consoles spit sparks. The Engineering console explodes, incinerating the luckless CREWMAN stationed there. KIM is thrown hard against his console. He pulls himself up just as the display explodes, spraying him with plastic shards and sparks. He is flung back and tumbles to the deck, his face a mass of bruises and cuts. The lights go out and the only source of illumination is the fires in the tactical and engineering consoles.

F/X â€" The _VOYAGER_ is still tumbling end-over-end, apparently dead. The glowing deuterium vapour generates an eerie shroud around the ship. Around her are the wisps of nebulae and distortion waves from the supernova remnant. There are several bright flashes from within the vapour, as if something were flashing spontaneously into flame.

INT. BRIDGE

The emergency blue lights underneath the stair tread light up, as do a few other dim emergency lights. The control displays flicker weakly. There is a groan as JANEWAY pulls herself onto her knees and looks around the darkened, burning bridge.

JANEWAY

[Nonplussed] I don't believe it! We're alive!

SEVEN

[Whispers] Captain, shh! Their sensors will detect the reverberation of speech. I have already signalled silent running.

JANEWAY looks around at SEVEN, who is cradling a semi-conscious KIM in her lap. The Captain nods decisively and touches CHAKOTAY on the shoulder, signalling him to lie still. His chair has bent forward, tipping him unceremoniously onto the deck.

F/X â€" The alien warship hovers above the cloud of deuterium gas, now mingling with the supernova remnant's nebulosity. The huge warship hovers silently for a long moment, as if contemplating its

work. Suddenly, it quickly rotates 100 degrees to the left. It's ten spines retract and it accelerates forward very fast. As it reaches the middle distance, it seems to plunge _through _space, surrounded by a bright white light. It disappears with a white flash [The TNG â€" _Descent _Transwarp effect].

INT. BRIDGE

SEVEN gently lies KIM's head on the deck, rises and examines her controls. She audibly sighs with relief and touches a control. The lights slowly come up to about 50% of normal illumination. The displays become steady. Vent fans begin to suck away the smoke from the fires and the automatic extinguishers activate.

SEVEN

I've detected a transwarp ingress. They are gone.

JANEWAY

[With a hiss of discomfort as she rises] Stations, people. I want a full damage report.

EVERONE is picking themselves off the floor. PARIS manipulates the Helm controls (he stabilises the ship). JANEWAY moves to help KIM, who is pulling himself to his feet. CHAKOTAY moves to the CREWMAN who sat at Engineering. He is beyond help. CHAKOTAY sighs, closes the man's eyes and looks away. KIM is standing and he moves to his battered console. The forward console is out, but the rear wall displays are working.

SEVEN

[Absently] Harry, you are damaged. You should rest.

KIM

I'll live, Seven. My brain is still working and we need to get working NOW or, according to these readings, we might have to abandon ship!

EVERYONE looks at KIM as the import of his report sinks in.

FADE

ACT 5

F/X â€" The _VOYAGER_ stabilises and its running and internal lights come back on.

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY stands in the centre of the BRIDGE as reports begin to trickle in. The impact knocked most ship's systems off-line, but the damage is more cosmetic than serious. CHAKOTAY has replaced KIM at Ops. The young Lieutenant is doubtless now in Sickbay.

JANEWAY

That was an interesting trick, Seven. What exactly did you do?

SEVEN

I over-charged our rear deflectors and shaped the field to create what would appear to the sensors on the graviton torpedo to be the ship's hull. The shield pulse also absorbed over 75% of the detonation energy. I then shut down all ship's systems and vented deuterium and antimatter to simulate the destruction of the _Voyager._ In the low-sensor efficiency environment of the supernova remnant, it was enough to shield us from Species 704's scans.

JANEWAY smiles slightly and nods in approval of SEVEN's initiative. CHAKOTAY looks up from Ops.

CHAKOTAY

A 'Play Dead' manoeuvre worthy of the Maquis, Seven. Well done.

SEVEN

The Borg found it was the only tactic small vessels could use to avoid a graviton torpedo attack.

There is a long pause before JANEWAY speaks again.

JANEWAY

Seven, you said that Borg records did not contain any details of Species 704.

SEVEN

[Frowns] They do not Captain. [Beat] The tactic simply appeared in my consciousness. It is possibly another download from my bio-transceiver chip.

TORRES (v/o)

Wherever it came from it saved our lives, Seven. Unfortunately it also knocked main power, most of the Electro-Plasma System network and all the ship's shield generators off line. I'll need your help to put them back together.

JANEWAY

Get going, Seven. [Looks around] I want a full meeting of all senior staff in six hours time. We'll discuss these events then. Until then, we have a ship to save.

F/X " The _Voyager _is still hovering within the scattered nebulosity of the supernova remnant.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's Log, stardate 53898.5, six hours after the attack. After four hours of the most urgent repairs, we are no longer in any

immediate danger of loosing the _Voyager_.

MONTAGE " VOYAGER CORRIDOR. JANEWAY is pacing along the corridor, skirting around a REPAIR TEAM who have opened a wall panel and are fixing some damaged system.

MONTAGE " MAIN ENGINEERING. TORRES, CAREY and VORIK are working on several exploded consoles in the atrium. TORRES is giving orders to VORIK, who nods and walks away.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Engineering has now restored main power and the ship's systems are beginning to function normally again. With the immediate pressure off the crew, shock is beginning to set in. The sheer brutality and overwhelming power of this new species has left everyone amazed.

MONTAGE " ASTROMETRICS. SEVEN and JENNY DELANEY are inputting information into the main console, while two CREWMEN shore up one of the vertical supports. DELANEY, whose right arm is in a sling and has a bandage on her forehead, is talking fast and excitedly, much to SEVEN's patent bemusement.

MONTAGE " BRIDGE. CHAKOTAY and KIM are discussing something as KIM works on repairing his console. A CREWMAN walks past carrying a coil of ODN cable.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Mercifully, casualties have been light. There was only one fatality: Crewman Joel Stanford was killed when the bridge engineering station exploded. Nonetheless, over a quarter of the crew are currently under The Doctor's tender care.

MONTAGE " SICKBAY. The DOCTOR and PARIS are working on a badly burnt ENGINEERING CREWWOMAN on the main BIO BED. A round dozen other patients are either on the other beds, or sitting on the floor, wrapped in thermal blankets.

JANEWAY (v/o)

It is a mercy that our Red Alert protocols include automatically transferring The Doctor to his Mobile Emitter. If he had gone off-line along with the other primary systems, we would have lost a lot more of our people.

MONTAGE " MESS HALL, acting as an auxiliary infirmary. NEELIX and a MEDIC are handing out food and help to the wounded, while a grim JANEWAY paces through, occasionally talking to a crewmember and smiling in an attempt to bolster morale. She has a slight limp, but has obviously refused treatment until the DOCTOR has seen to the rest of the crew.

JANEWAY (v/o)

I have summoned a meeting of the senior staff. I hope that, working together; we can determine what, if anything, we can do next.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM.

A battered-looking JANEWAY is sitting at the head of the table, drinking a coffee and looking like she would rather be asleep. TUVOK sits to her left. He has a large bandage on the side of his face and wears a meditative expression.

The DOOR opens and the DOCTOR and PARIS walks in. The DOCTOR shoots JANEWAY a worried look.

DOCTOR

Captain, I expect to see you in Sickbay after the meeting.

JANEWAY

[Weak smile] I'll try to find the time, Doctor.

The DOCTOR snorts and takes a seat to her LEFT. PARIS watches with bemusement. The door opens again and TORRES walks in. Grease and burns cover her uniform and she looks like she has just gone three rounds with a garbage compactor. PARIS smiles and drapes an arm over her shoulder. She leans on him gratefully and allows him to lead her to a seat table to the Captain's left.

KIM and CHAKOTAY enter talking about the repair schedules. CHAKOTAY gives JANEWAY a worried look, making her smile. If she does not go to SICKBAY willingly, she has no doubt that her First Officer will throw her over his shoulder and carry her there.

The last to arrive are SEVEN and NEELIX

NEELIX

Thanks for helping out in the Mess Hall, Seven.

SEVEN

You are welcome, Mr. Neelix.

NEELIX sits to the Captain's right. SEVEN remains standing by the door. She seems distracted.

JANEWAY

I'm sure you all know why we are here. Let's start with a full status report.

There is a long pause while JANEWAY waits for someone to go first. Finally, TORRES draws the short straw.

TORRES

We've finally got the Warp Plasma Conduits repaired, Captain. Lt. Carey tells me that we should have the EPS system running at 80% efficiency within the next hour.

JANEWAY

Only 80 percent, B'Elanna?

TORRES

Unfortunately. [Sighs] The gravitational pulse from that alien torpedo destabilised the pressure balances throughout the entire system. We'll have to make do until we can finish recalibrating all the flow sensors on the network.

JANEWAY

Keep on it, B'Elanna. If you need any more hands, tell me. What about propulsion, Mr. Paris?

PARIS

[Seems to jump at the question] Ah, all drive systems are running according to the shipyard specifications, Captain. I would take any warp manoeuvres slowly until we have time to calibrate the subspace field generators.

CHAKOTAY

What's the problem, Tom?

PARIS

[Easy going smile] It's just a precaution after being hit by that enormous gravity well. I want to be sure of the generators in actual operation rather than simulation before trying anything too dramatic.

JANEWAY

That will be your first priority, Tom. I want all ship's systems reliable before we face those creatures again.

KIM

Ah, Captain, about that matterâ€¦

EVERYONE turns to look at KIM, who begins to shift uneasily under the scrutiny.

KIM

Do we have the right to get involved with this? [Uncomfortable pause] I mean this seems a perfect Prime Directive situation. We aren't at war with these people. We aren't even from this part of the galaxy. Whatever they want it probably doesn't involve us. We should just leave the area and let nature take its course.

KIM winces at the looks everyone is giving him. TUVOK finally breaks the silence.

TUVOK

Mr. Kim seems to make a valid point.

JANEWAY

Yes he does [Reassuring 'Mum' smile] And normally I'd agree with him. This is not a typical situation, however. Species 704, that's their Borg designation, refused to respond to an attempt at communication. They continued to attack, although we told them that we weren't from this quadrant. I suspect that they will attack any space vessel they encounter. We will have to face them eventually. I prefer to do it on our own terms and at our own time.

There is a long thoughtful pause before JANEWAY continues.

JANEWAY

How is our tactical situation, Mr. Tuvok?

TUVOK

All weapons systems are on line. However, Lt. Torres informs me that it will be another 6 hours before we have full shielding capacity back.

JANEWAY looks at TORRES for an explanation.

TORRES

[Sits up nervously] That's right, Captain. Seven's timely idea might have kept us alive, but it also burnt out the subspace solenoids in all our shield generators. We're replacing them as fast as we can.

TUVOK

In any case, the utility of our tactical systems against the recorded capabilities of this new species is questionable. We expended twelve photon torpedoes for infinitesimal gains and a near miss from the aliens' main weapons nearly disabled our shields. I doubt that our phasers will perform any better against this threat.

JANEWAY

[Nods thoughtfully] Yes, we are outgunned at the moment. [Turns to SEVEN] Seven, can you access the hidden Borg files on Species 704 and determine if the Borg found any weaknesses in their tactical systems we can exploit?

SEVEN does not seem to be listening. She has moved over to the side of the main screen. She almost appears to be daydreaming.

JANEWAY

Seven, I asked you a question.

No reply. SEVEN stays in almost a catatonic state.

JANEWAY

[Concerned] Seven are you alright?

SEVEN slowly turns to look at JANEWAY, her expression blank, her lips quirked in a sneer of superiority. Nightmarishly, a flare of red laser light flashes out from her prosthetic eye and scans the Captain.

SEVEN

[Slowly, mechanically] Weâ€| are no longerâ€| the one you call 'Seven of Nine.' Weâ€| are the Borg.

There is chaos. TUVOK jumps to his feet, pointing his phaser at SEVEN. CHAKOTAY is a second behind, interposing himself between SEVEN and JANEWAY, pointing his own phaser at SEVEN. The DOCTOR and NEELIX dive out of SEVEN's reach. The medical MONITOR behind SEVEN's ear begins to shriek its warning.

SEVEN looks around at the forest of phasers now pointed at her before continuing.

SEVEN

We mean you no harm. We have merely appropriated this former Drone to relay information you will require to survive.

The DOCTOR begins to scan SEVEN with his Tricorder

DOCTOR

This isn't the Collective, Captain. There are no subspace communications activity, no increased activity in her implants. The readings of Seven's neurological activity are like her previous hallucinatory experiences.

JANEWAY

[Outraged] Whoever you are, you have appropriated my crewman's body without her permission. I demand that you release her immediately.

SEVEN

[Lots of electronic overtones] Your friend will come to no harm from our actions, Captain Katherine Janeway. She is a conduit to allow us to communicate, no more.

JANEWAY

Who are you?

SEVEN

We are a warning implanted into each successive generation. A warning of a terrible mistake made so long ago implanted not in the mind but into the most fundamental aspect of our collective self so that we may never forget.

CHAKOTAY

An electronic 'race memory.' [Puzzled] What mistake do you refer to?

SEVEN

Species 704. Our greatest failure, the result of the first mistake:
[Beat] arrogance. Now they are your greatest threat.

With a blur of motion, SEVEN whirls and stabs her ASSIMILATION
TUBULES into the viewscreen's controls. Everyone jumps and KIM pulls
out his Tricorder. He starts scanning.

TUVOK

What is she doing?

KIM

[Amazed] She's injecting reengineering nano-probes into the
viewscreen. They're turning it into a holo-projector!

SEVEN

It is more suitable for our needs.

As the crew look on an image forms above the table (F/X). Our POV
zooms on the image and it becomes an F/X sequence.

F/X " Near a class-M planet, three Borg CUBES fly through
space.

SEVEN (v/o)

Two hundred thousand years before this time, the Borg were already a
mighty race, dominating much of the area you now call the 'Delta
Quadrant.'

F/X " The CUBES swing away from the planet and head off into space
at high warp speed.

SEVEN (v/o)

We had assimilated hundreds of races; brought order to thousands of
worlds. Many younger races regarded us as gods or demons. In our
arrogance, the Collective began to agree with this assessment. We
determined that we were greater and above all other things. This was
our greatest fault.

Like many other races, we detected the first signs of the periodic
reduction in subspace integrity. At first, we were alarmed, seeing
the end of our great empire of worlds, but soon we assimilated the
knowledge transwarp travel. This taught us that the changes were
simply a natural universal cycle. In our arrogance, we did not
realise that if we could use reduced subspace integrity to travel
further at transwarp speeds, so could others.

F/X " The Cubes drop out of warp and join large flight of other
CUBES and SPHERES surrounding a large planet. Doubtless they are
there to assimilate some luckless species.

SEVEN (v/o)

We heard the first cries of distress from species in an area of particularly low subspace integrity, but we ignored them. What ever could threaten the scuttling small things inhabiting the galaxy could never harm the might Borg. So we continued oblivious until it is too late.

F/X " The POV swings around. Behind the Borg flotilla, there are a series of flashes as ships drop out of transwarp. In moments, it is clear that they are DESTROYER warships of various types. Pencil-thin blue beams and bright pulses of electric blue energy smash into the Borg vessels, which fall quickly and with a minimum of resistance.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Who are they?

SEVEN (v/o)

They are the antithesis of all you value, Captain. They are anti-life. They are ancient, older than the oldest known civilisation of this galaxy, and are possessed of technologies that defy the laws of physics. They believe only they have the right to rule this universe, and that all other life forms exist only to serve them. In their own corner of the universe, they are the masters of trillions of worlds, the overlords of billions of races. They hold hundreds of galaxies in their sway. They are conquerors of worlds, destroyers of civilisations.

F/X " MONTAGE " DESTROYER warships fighting Borg vessels in deep space. Seven DESTROYER warships in a star formation, firing 'Death Star-style' to blow up a planet. Massive ground vehicles exchanging fire with a Borg ground facility.

SEVEN

We designated them 'Species 704,' but as time went on, we gave them a name that fits their purpose. They are The Destroyers.

F/X " A Borg flotilla engages a squadron of DESTROYER warships head on near a class-M planet. An immense firefight eventually renders the planet a fiery wasteland. Despite using incredibly powerful weapons, the Borg loses the battle decisively.

SEVEN

Despite our mightiest efforts, the Destroyers totally resisted assimilation. They drove us back, world by world, smashing our civilisation. Other races, too, fell before their advance.

F/X " Another septet of DESTROYER warships smashes a Borg planet (use the one from _Scorpion, Part 1_). All the CUBES in the area flee. DESTROYER ships catch and destroy some of them.

PARIS (v/o)

Very dramatic, but explain why the Collective still exists if these 'Destroyers' were so powerful.

SEVEN (v/o)

We learnt that we were no better than any other race. In desperation, facing our final defeat, we joined with the mightiest races of our galaxy and managed to hold the Destroyers back.

F/X â€" Borg vessels flying in formation with ships from many other cultures (use any imaginative designs you like). They race forward and manage to kill a small squadron of DESTROYER vessels. The allies suffer heavy losses in the battle.

SEVEN (v/o)

Working with these others, we realised the Destroyers' one weakness. They relied on a single artificial wormhole to connect us with their home territories. Destroy that link and you defeat their invasion.

F/X â€" An amazing battle near a wormhole like the one we saw only a few scenes ago. Ships of all kinds throw themselves at Destroyer warships, ramming them if necessary. Finally, a blazing CUBE manages to reach the wormhole. It rams a stabilising generator and the impact destroys both. The wormhole remains steady for a moment, then finally collapses, destroying the other five generators.

KIM (v/o)

Wow!

SEVEN (v/o)

Although we had won the war, the enemy still won many further battles. In the time the wormhole existed, the Destroyers moved hundreds of thousands of warships into our galaxy and suborned entire systems to construct others. These refugees were powerful enough to strike deep into our territory and extract a horrible revenge.

F/X â€" Seven Destroyer battleships do their planet-killer routine.

SEVEN (v/o)

[Sadly] So died the homeworld of Species 1, the Borg. With our central nexus destroyed, the Collective almost collapsed. It took us over 180 millennia to rebuild our empire and again start assimilating species. [Darkly] In that time, we learnt that the Destroyers had returned, 100,000 years after the Great War. A race called the Iconians fought them and drove them away, but the price was their civilisation.

F/X â€" MONTAGE â€" Images of archaeology, including Iconian, T'kon, Promellian and unidentifiable artefacts. Each artefact disappears in flame and we see a Destroyer spacecraft firing at unseen targets.

SEVEN (v/o)

Nine times in the last million years, the Destroyers invaded our galaxy, seeking to extend their empire. Nine times, they were driven back at a nightmarish cost.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

The HOLOGRAM disappears. SEVEN retracts her TUBULES and faces the room once more

CHAKOTAY

Then this is [beat] the tenth host?

SEVEN

[Cocks her head] Yes. The religious implications are relevant. This time, they appear to have learnt their lesson. There is no great civilisation to face them in the region around their wormhole. They can build up their numbers undisturbed before moving to widen their conquests.

SEVEN looks around the table, looking each character in the eye.

SEVEN

The Collective has again fallen into the trap of arrogance. Even now they withdraw their ships to their core worlds, thinking to ride out this dark invasion. Consequently, you are the only people aware of the true nature of this threat and have the means to act against it.

Do not believe you can avoid this conflict. If the Destroyers are not stopped while their forces are still weak, then they will not be stopped.

SEVEN looks directly at JANEWAY

SEVEN

The Voyager is the last hope for galactic civilisation. The Destroyers must be stopped before they can build up their forces to too great a strength. If they are not stopped quickly, then they will not be stopped at all. You must act or the light of civilisation will be snuffed out forever beneath the darkness of their tyranny. You must stop them, Captain! You MUST!

SEVEN's eyes suddenly roll back into her head and she collapses in a heap. EVERYONE jumps forward at once. The DOCTOR runs his medical scanner around SEVEN's head.

DOCTOR

Her synaptic establishment activity has gone off the scale! [Adjusts his Tricorder] Her body is rejecting the Bio-Transceiver Chip. [Turns to PARIS] Alert Sickbay and get ready for emergency surgery!

SEVEN's eyes flicker open and she looks around worriedly.

SEVEN

[Weakly] My head hurts!

KIM

[Kindly, but worried] Hold on, Seven. The Doctor will look after you.

SEVEN

[Eyes closing again] Don't worry, Harry. I'll be alrightâ€¦

POV on SEVEN's face and pulling back and up, out of the BRIEFING ROOM. THE DOCTOR supervises PARIS and KIM as they lift SEVEN onto a hover-stretcher just brought in by a MEDIC. As they wheel her away, JANEWAY turns to CHAKOTAY. The Captain is holding herself as if to ward off the cold.

JANEWAY

[Whispers] Now what?

CHAKOTAY

[Gently] I guess we go to war.

FADE

MONTAGE of various departments including ENGINEERING, ASTROMETRICS, the BRIG, SICKBAY and the SHUTTLEBAY with the crew standing, watching monitors. The monitors are showing edited highlights of SEVEN's show-and-tell, along with plenty of images of the Destroyers' power. MONTAGE ends with JANEWAY on the BRIDGE, watching the highlights conclude on the main viewscreen. When the program ends, JANEWAY addresses the crew.

JANEWAY

So, there you have it. We are at war. This isn't a war any of us wanted or expected, but it is a war we must fight nonetheless. If the Destroyers are not beaten while their presence in our galaxy is still small, then we have virtually no hope of stopping them from overrunning every civilisation in the galaxy, [Quiet, but clear] including the Federation.

JANEWAY begins to walk around the BRIDGE, passing the various SENIOR OFFICERS and smiling at them reassuringly. It is like her speech at the beginning of the voyage home.

JANEWAY

[Firm] I won't lie to you. We are alone out here. We must somehow forge an alliance out of the squabbling civilisations of this sector to fight the Destroyers and somehow destroy their passage to our galaxy from theirs. [Beat] We have one advantage. Before it failed, Seven of Nine's Bio-Transceiver Chip downloaded into her memory everything the Borg learned about the Destroyers during their war 200,000 years ago. Perhaps, somewhere in that information there is the vital clue that can win this struggle.

JANEWAY smiles at SEVEN, who nods gravely, sensible of the immense weight on her shoulders.

JANEWAY

[Rousingly] The Borg may be trying to sit out of this one, but we have proven ourselves their equal time and time again. This is it, people: the time you keep on reading about in the history texts. This is the moment that will define future history for millennia to come. Either we win this war [beat, gravely] or the future ends, here and now.

JANEWAY looks around at her senior officers, her crew, her friends, the only family she is ever likely to have.

JANEWAY

I will just say this. [Proud] I have never served with a finer, more capable, more professional or more courageous crew. Time and time again, we have done the impossible. [Mischievous] So, let's do it again! [Firm] I know that you will continue to do the highest traditions of Starfleet, and me, proud. Janeway out.

The CREW scatter to their stations. JANEWAY sits in her chair, straight and proud, much to CHAKOTAY's approval.

JANEWAY

Signal yellow alert. [LIGHTS and SOUNDS - Yellow Alert] All departments, status reports.

PARIS

All drive systems operational. Full manoeuvrability is available in all flight modes.

TUVOK

All weapons and shielding systems operational. Targeting sensors are at optimum efficiency. All combat teams are armed and standing by.

TORRES (v/o)

Main power fully available. Secondary power is on immediate standby. Auxiliary generators are ready. All batteries are charged.

WILDMAN

All sensor systems read green. Once we are clear of the supernova remnant, all sensors will be at maximum efficiency.

SEVEN

Borg modifications to power and tactical systems read nominal. Hull auto-regeneration nano-probes are armed and ready.

KIM

All stations read manned. Stand-by and emergency crews all ready.

JANEWAY

[Proud] Good. Mr. Paris: set course 042 mark 067, ahead Warp 4 until we clear the supernova remnant, then decelerate to Warp 1. Lt. Wildman, prepare for full sensor sweep.

The CREW reply with the appropriate "Aye, Captain," making JANEWAY smile.

F/X - The _voyager _leaps to warp speed away from the supernova remnant.

INT. BRIDGE

WILDMAN checks the sensors as the ship races forward.

KIM

We are clearing the worst of the interference, Ma'am.

JANEWAY

[Rising] Slow to Warp 1, Mr. Paris. Lt. Wildman, begin sweep with passive sensors only.

WILDMAN

Commencing sensor sweep. [Pause] Damn!

JANEWAY walks over to WILDMAN's station.

JANEWAY

What is it Sam?

WILDMAN

It looks like our playmate has called his friends. There are at least thirty Destroyer vessels detectable to passive sensors, all surrounding the anomaly.

JANEWAY

[Wry] Well, I wasn't expecting it to be that easy.

CHAKOTAY

So I suppose we go about building an alliance.

KIM

[Urgent] Captain! I am picking up an all-frequency distress call. Captain, it's the Adronai. They say they're under attack by ships that match known Destroyer designs.

JANEWAY

[Firm] Mr. Paris, alter course for the Adronai homeworld and accelerate to Warp 9.6. Let's hope we can make a difference.

F/X - The Voyager accelerates away and vanishes into the distance

CONTINUITY

To be continued, next time on Star Trek - Voyager!

**

In Conclusionâ€|

**

So, what do you think? Should I continue, or desist in wasting my time on this pap? J

Feedback? Ooh, yes! I crave it at BenRG@RGFlat.freemove.co.uk

2. Dark Horizon

> <meta name="Generator"> The Dark Times Cycle, Episode 2 - 'Dark Horizon'

The Dark Times Cycle, Episode 2 - 'Dark Horizon'

By Ben Russell-Gough

Star Trek â€" Voyager, and all characters and technologies of the Star Trek universe are the sole property of Paramount Pictures, a division of Viacom Communications. No breach of copyright or trademark rights intended. This is a non-profit work written for the author's (and the readers') enjoyment.

Species 704 (The Destroyers) are my work.

Continuity note: This story occurs at the end of season 6/the beginning of season 7 and is an ALTERNATE UNIVERSE story. It is in place of UNIMATRIX ZERO, as I think the Borg are over-exposed!

This story is presented in the form of a screenplay by way of an experiment. Please tell me what you think!

The struggle against the Destroyers has only just begun.

TEASER

CONTINUITY

Last time on Star Trek â€" Voyagerâ€|

INT. ASTROMETRICS

KIM

I still think this theory is a little, uh, strange, B'Elanna. I mean, using a natural subspace depression as an energy shortcut to building a transwarp gateway? It sounds very dangerous!

INT. ASTROMETRICS

Obviously later and a different scene.

SEVEN

I am feelingâ€¦ [Pauses, frustrated. She has difficulty in expressing her feelings] I am feelingâ€¦ anxiety? I am experiencing a clear fear response to this subspace anomaly, yet I cannot determine the source of those fears.

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

SEVEN

My own investigations into my recent experiences have revealed that there may be an unsuspected danger either in the experiment or in this area of space.

Cut on JANEWAY's concerned expression.

SEVEN

[Rueful] I cannot provide many details, Captain, as I do not have them. During my structured meditation, I experienced a detailed sensory hallucination that referred directly to a 'Species 704,' who successfully resisted assimilation and nearly devastated the Collective several millennia ago.

F/X â€" Hallucinatory vision of the Destroyers' might, including the destruction of the VOYAGER and SEVEN cradling KIM's broken body.

SEVEN (v/o)

The images included very specific imaginings of the destruction of the _Voyager_ and the conquest of the Alpha Quadrant. The images of the death of the crew were vivid. They were mostâ€¦ disturbing.

INT. BRIDGE

KIM (out of shot)

[Alarmed] Captain! I'm reading a transwarp egress at 133 mark 027. It's a Borg Cruiser-class Sphere!

JANEWAY

Red alert!

LIGHTS and SOUND â€" Lights dim, red tracer lights begin to shine and the siren begins to hoot.

WILDMAN

Captain, the anomaly!

Everyone swings around to face the VIEWSCREEN.

VIEWSCREEN â€" F/X â€" The ANOMALY is now visible as a blue-green tinged depression against the stars darkening towards the centre.

The centre of the anomaly seems to be stretching away from normal space as if something were pulling it. It now looks like water racing down glowing blue-green hole. At the very 'bottom,' there is a bright blue-white glowâ€¦ Suddenly there is a mighty flare of light from deep within. A spear of energy is sent flaring out from the centre, deep out into space. A vivid blue-white ring shoots away from the perimeter of the anomaly.

INT. BRIDGE

The shock wave throws everyone about.

F/X - As the flare dies away, there is now a deep blue-white vortex leading into a pitch black hole. It is very like the "Babylon 5" exit jump point effect. Occasionally, the vortex flares as a ring of energy races up from deep within.

INT. BRIDGE

KIM

[Awed] It's â€¦ an artificial wormhole!

WILDMAN

I'm reading another ship coming through the wormhole, Captain. It is much bigger than those six stabilising generators. I mean much bigger. At least 2 kilometres in length and well over 250 million metric tonnes mass.

JANEWAY

[Nearly a whisper] On screen, Mr. Kim.

F/X â€" The first appearance of the strangely insect-like TIAMAT-CLASS Destroyer dreadnought. The TIAMAT holds station in front of the WORMHOLE for a moment then blows a Borg SPHERE into shrapnel.

JANEWAY

Get us out of here, Mr. Paris. Maximum Warp.

F/X - The TIAMAT fires at the VOYAGER as it races over it.

INT. BRIDGE

The entire crew is thrown forward by a tremendous concussion. TUVOK's rear wall displays explode with a bright white flash, throwing him over his console to the deck. The CREWMAN at the Ship's Status display is also thrown to the deck beside SEVEN.

Bits of the Tactical console rain down and fire burns in the shattered remains. Several overhead ODN trunks in the same area are ruptured and fibre-optic cables create a strangely art-deco background to the fire. The Ship's Status display begins to flicker

CHAKOTAY checks the centre console.

CHAKOTAY

[Horrificed] That was just a near miss, Captain! A single glancing blow and it still nearly knocked out our shields! Our rear shields are down 67% and our forward shields are down 25%!

JANEWAY

Fire torpedoes.

SEVEN responds immediately, touching a single control.

F/X - Three torpedoes spit from both of the _Voyager_'s rear tubes and flash away through space, rapidly forming a five-pointed star.

INT. BRIDGE

SEVEN at her station.

SEVEN

Torpedoes away. Weapons running straight, hot and normal.

VIEWSCREEN - F/X - We see the alien warship. The five pointed star of torpedoes flashes into view and detonate minutely short of its shields. Six enormous red fireballs blossom out and the alien disappears for a second. The alien warship emerges untouched. Several Starfleet jaws hit the deck.

INT. BRIDGE

SEVEN's console begins to beep loudly. Seven freezes for a second before reporting.

SEVEN

A single missile is approaching at approximately Warp 9.999. Impact in 30 seconds.

VIEWSCREEN " F/X " The alien torpedo is moving fast towards the bottom of the screen.

SEVEN (v/o)

Sensors indicate that the weapon has some form of artificial singularity for a warhead.

JANEWAY

All hands, brace for impact!

KIM

Impact in five seconds. Four" three" two" Torpedo impact"
NOW!

F/X " There is a massive blue-white explosion that sends the _VOYAGER_ tumbling end over end. The starship's lights go out and glowing red deuterium fuel begins to spill from the ship's bussard ram-scoops.

INT. BRIDGE

The explosion sends EVERYONE flying about the compartment. Several consoles spit sparks. The Engineering console explodes, incinerating the luckless CREWMAN stationed there. KIM is thrown hard against his console. He pulls himself up just as the display explodes, spraying him with plastic shards and sparks. He is flung back and tumbles to the deck, his face a mass of bruises and cuts. The lights go out and the only source of illumination is the fires in the tactical and engineering consoles.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

We see SEVEN turn the VIEWSCREEN into a holographic emitter.

F/X " Three Borg CUBES joint a flotilla around a planet.

SEVEN (v/o)

Two hundred thousand years before this time, the Borg were already a mighty race, dominating much of the area you now call the 'Delta Quadrant.' We heard the first cries of distress from species in an area of particularly low subspace integrity, but we ignored them. What ever could threaten the scuttling small things inhabiting the galaxy could never harm the might Borg. So we continued oblivious until it is too late.

F/X " The POV swings around. Behind the Borg flotilla, there are a series of flashes as ships drop out of transwarp. In moments, it is clear that they are DESTROYER warships of various types. Pencil-thin blue beams and bright pulses of electric blue energy smash into the Borg vessels, which fall quickly and with a minimum of resistance.

SEVEN (v/o)

They are the antithesis of all you value, Captain. They are anti-life. They are ancient, older than the oldest known civilisation of this galaxy, and are possessed of technologies that defy the laws of physics. They believe only they have the right to rule this universe, and that all other life forms exist only to serve them. In their own corner of the universe, they are the masters of trillions of worlds, the overlords of billions of races. They hold hundreds of galaxies in their sway. They are conquerors of worlds, destroyers of civilisations.

F/X " MONTAGE " DESTROYER warships fighting Borg vessels in deep space. Seven DESTROYER warships in a star formation, firing 'Death Star-style' to blow up a planet. Massive ground vehicles exchanging fire with a Borg ground facility.

SEVEN (v/o)

We designated them 'Species 704,' but as time went on, we gave them a

name that fits their purpose. They are The Destroyers.

F/X " A Borg flotilla engages a squadron of DESTROYER warships head on near a class-M planet. An immense firefight eventually renders the planet a fiery wasteland. Despite using incredibly powerful weapons, the Borg loses the battle decisively.

SEVEN (v/o)

Nine times in the last million years, the Destroyers invaded our galaxy, seeking to extend their empire. Nine times, they were driven back at a nightmarish cost.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

SEVEN

Do not believe you can avoid this conflict. If the Destroyers are not stopped while their forces are still weak, then they will not be stopped.

SEVEN looks directly at JANEWAY

SEVEN

The Voyager is the last hope for galactic civilisation. The Destroyers must be stopped before they can build up their forces to too great a strength. If they are not stopped quickly, then they will not be stopped at all. You must act or the light of civilisation will be snuffed out forever beneath the darkness of their tyranny.

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY addresses the crew.

JANEWAY

[Rousing] The Borg may be trying to sit out of this one, but we have proven ourselves their equal time and time again. This is it, people: the time you keep on reading about in the history texts. This is the moment that will define future history for millennia to come. Either we win this war [beat, gravely] or the future ends, here and now.

F/X - The VOYAGER moving away from the supernova remnant into deep space.

INT. BRIDGE

KIM

We are clearing the worst of the interference,
Ma'am.

JANEWAY

[Rising] Slow to Warp 1, Mr. Paris. Lt. Wildman, begin sweep with passive sensors only.

JANEWAY is standing next to Samantha WILDMAN at the science console

WILDMAN

It looks like our playmate has called his friends. There are at least thirty Destroyer vessels detectable to passive sensors, all surrounding the anomaly.

JANEWAY

[Wry] Well, I wasn't expecting it to be that easy.

CHAKOTAY

So I suppose we go about building an alliance.

KIM

[Urgent] Captain! I am picking up an all-frequency distress call. Captain, it's the Adronai. They say they're under attack by ships that match known Destroyer designs.

JANEWAY

[Firm] Mr. Paris, alter course for the Adronai homeworld and accelerate to Warp 9.6. Let's hope we can make a difference.

CONTINUITY

And now, the continuation!

INT. BRIDGE

Time has passed, but the senior CREW are all still at their stations. JANEWAY is pacing restlessly around the command area while CHAKOTAY is checking something on the centre console.

KIM

Captain, the Adronai transmissions are still very confused, but I've managed to sort out an audio component of one of the messages coming from their home system.

JANEWAY

Let's hear it, Mr. Kim.

JANEWAY sits in her chair. A very low-quality signal is played over the Bridge speakers.

ADRONAI (v/o)

Distress! Distress! Can anyone hear us [Static] â€|attack! Unknown designs, very powerful. Theyâ€| [Static] Repeat, this is Deep Station Three under attack from unknown hostiles! Anyone! Please! [Static] The defence perimeter isâ€| [Static] Command please send assâ€| [Static] Our [static] all destroyed. We can't hold out muchâ€| [Signal quality degrades down to totally

unintelligible]

JANEWAY

Can we send a signal, Tuvok?

TUVOK looks up from his console with a raised brow.

TUVOK

Inadvisable, Captain. A signal may warn the Destroyers that we are on the way.

SEVEN

[Dryly] It would increase our chances if we can get some measure of tactical surprise.

JANEWAY nods thoughtfully. It obviously distresses her not to be able to offer some kind of assurance to the unknown Adronai speaker, but she agrees with her officers' advice.

KIM

I'm getting a visual, Captain.

JANEWAY

On screen.

VIEWSCREEN - F/X - POV in orbit around a large Jupiter-type planet. From the foreground, this is obviously a space station of some kind. A moon hovers in the middle distance.

Three Adronai STARSHIPS are firing relentlessly at something off screen. Suddenly a pencil-thin blue white beam hits the nearest STARSHIP, which simply blows apart in a massive blue-white explosion. Four small single-hulled darts with three fins equally spaced around the rear and three forward facing 'fangs' suddenly race into shot, and open fire with fast-firing blue-white pulses. These are Destroyer DART-class fighters.

ADRONAI (v/o)

Oh no! [Static] them back. All hands to the defence grid! Command we need relief. [Static] are attacking!

The second STARSHIP is hit several times. Its shields absorb the first burst, but the second tears into the hull, ripping an enormous chunk out of the hull in a bright yellow-white flash. Several more shots rip the STARSHIP into a shapeless piece of blazing debris that begins to drift away. The third STARSHIP is also swiftly smashed by another foursome of DARTs.

ADRONAI (v/o)

[Static] vessels, this is Adronai Deep Station Three. We surrender! We [Static] Please, we [static] want, just stop firing!

A TIAMAT dreadnought moves impressively into the shot, it turns towards the POV and fires its main weapon. There is a brief, extremely truncated scream and then the screen dissolves into static.

KIM

[Quiet] Signal lost, Captain

JANEWAY

[Grim] Increase to Warp 9.975, Mr. Paris.

FADE

[New opening to titles] SFX " The _Voyager_ moving at sub light in deep space.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Space: The final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship _Voyager_. Her ongoing mission, to find her way home. To cross a galaxy, carrying the dream of exploration beyond the farthest stars. To boldly go where no one has gone before!

Opening titles

ACT 1

F/X - The VOYAGER at maximum warp, screaming through deep space.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's Log: Stardate 53901.0. The Voyager is proceeding at maximum warp to the homeworld the Adronai, a race with whom we have recently made peaceful first contact. From the intermittent messages we can pick up through high-power subspace jamming, I am left in no doubt that they are under attack by the Destroyers, the mysterious extra-galactic aliens seemingly bent on conquest. [Beat, grimly] We are about to see if the Voyager is more able to face this threat now they no longer have the element of surprise.

INT. BRIDGE

There is a clear tenseness on the Bridge. Everyone looks nervous except TUVOK who looks even more serious than usual, JANEWAY, who just looks mad, and CHAKOTAY, who just looks grim and determined.

KIM

There have been no further Adronai transmissions for almost thirty minutes now, Ma'am.

JANEWAY

Understood, Mr. Kim. Keep checking all frequencies and set our receivers for maximum sensitivity. The Adronai might be using low-powered communications for security reasons.

KIM nods and programs his communications panel to perform the search.

PARIS

We are approaching the Adronai home system, Captain.

JANEWAY

Mr. Paris, slow to full impulse. Mr. Tuvok, red alert.

LIGHTS AND SOUNDS - Red alert.

F/X - The VOYAGER comes out of warp and shoots past our POV, deeper into a solar system much like our own.

JANEWAY

Mr. Tuvok, Mr. Kim, I want this ship silent. Disengage all active sensors and minimise all emissions. I want to keep the Destroyers from detecting us until the last minute.

TUVOK

Understood, Captain.

KIM

Yes, Ma'am.

JANEWAY

Sam, are there any signs of Destroyer activity in this system?

There is a pause as WILDMAN checks her sensor displays.

WILDMAN

[Quiet] Captain, there is something wrong here. I'm not even sure we have the right system.

JANEWAY frowns and walks over to join her.

JANEWAY

What is it?

WILDMAN

According to the data given to us by the Adronai, their home system has ten planets, two of which are Class-M. [Beat, grimly] I'm picking up only seven worlds, none class-M. There is an asteroid belt where you would expect class-M worlds and none of the class-J planets have larger moons. [Turns to look at JANEWAY] There are no power emissions in the system that I can detect at this range.

JANEWAY

[Hushed] My godâ€¦

CHAKOTAY

[Grim] It's one thing to see historical records, another entirely to see the reality.

F/X â€" The _Voyager_ is moving through an asteroid belt at sub-light speeds.

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

JANEWAY is sitting on her couch, watching a few medium-sized lumps of rock tumble past. Her face is expressionless, but the way she is clutching her coffee mug betrays her inner torment.

SOUNDS - DOOR BUZZER

JANEWAY

Come.

CHAKOTAY enters holding a PADD. He gives it to JANEWAY, who scans its contents apathetically.

JANEWAY

Care to give me a summary, Commander?

CHAKOTAY

The system looks a total loss, Captain. Both class-M worlds and a class-L that the Adronai heavily colonised are gone. Every moon and even vaguely colonisable body has a fresh set of craters and there are many refined alloy masses floating about the system. None have any power emissions.

JANEWAY checks the padd, her face cold. She sighs and looks up at CHAKOTAY with a grim expression.

JANEWAY

The Destroyers have named the game, Chakotay: Total war.

CHAKOTAY

[Angry] This isn't war, Katherine, it's genocide.

JANEWAY

A familiar story.

CHAKOTAY frowns a little.

CHAKOTAY

I am finding it hard to understand how you can stay so calm in the face of this disaster!

JANEWAY

We can't afford emotion anymore, Chakotay. If we let ourselves get angry, then we hand them the advantage.

JANEWAY stands and begins to pace around.

JANEWAY

We have to keep a level head and deal with this scientifically and dispassionately. We gather data and help where we can. Once we understand the nature of the beast, then we will strike. [Looks at CHAKOTAY] Once we start reacting on feelings, then we loose even that slim chance.

CHAKOTAY

[Angry] Captain, emotion is what gives us strength. If we stop caring, then we loose our motivation. We will be no better than they are [gestures violently to the window, he means the Destroyers].

JANEWAY

[Slight smile] That's my Angry Warrior speaking.

CHAKOTAY

[Frowns] Don't try to change the subject, Captain.

JANEWAY goes red and is about to explode. The INTERCOM interrupts her.

TUVOK (v/o)

Bridge to Captain.

JANEWAY

Go ahead, Commander.

TUVOK (v/o)

Captain, our scans have located a substantial piece of an Adronai space station. The scans show low-level power output and its structure appears sound at this range.

JANEWAY and CHAKOTAY both look up in surprise.

CHAKOTAY

Survivors?

TUVOK (v/o)

Impossible to tell from this range, sir. Given, however, our failure to detect this object until now, it is logical to assume that the Destroyers may have missed it also. Some Adronai may survive.

JANEWAY

Alright, Tuvok, set a course at maximum safe speed. Janeway out.

JANEWAY moves to the door, but CHAKOTAY catches her arm. She looks around angrily.

CHAKOTAY

This discussion isn't over, Katherine. Its' merely postponed.

JANEWAY nods with a grim look, and exits the room, followed closely by CHAKOTAY.

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY and CHAKOTAY move to the respective seats. It is a tribute to their professionalism that there is no hint that they were a second from blows only a minute ago.

PARIS

E.T.A. at the Adronai space complex is two minutes, Captain.

JANEWAY

Thank you, Tom.

F/X " The _Voyager _cruises through an asteroid field. Our POV rotates around, so we can see a trapezoid metal structure drifting through the field. There are no visible lights. The longer of the two parallel sides has a hint of a thick cylindrical structure poking out, but it ends in torn and ragged metal. Some gas or vapour is escaping from this area

F/X " VIEWSCREEN " The structure is in the centre of the screen. A wire-frame graphic of an Adronai space station appears to one side. One of the four 'arms' around the central hub begins to flash white.

TUVOK (v/o)

We have positively identified the structure as part of an Adronai space station, Captain.

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY stands in the centre of the BRIDGE, behind PARIS. She is looking at the VIEWSCREEN with a thoughtful expression. TUVOK, KIM and SEVEN are at their accustomed stations at the rear. JANEWAY begins to play with her COM-BADGE. CHAKOTAY grins at this sight. He looks again at the VIEWSCREEN and sobers up.

CHAKOTAY

Mr. Kim, is there any sign of any survivors?

KIM works his station.

KIM

No, sir.

CHAKOTAY collapses slightly into his chair.

KIM

However, most of the structure is still pressurised and has safe levels of oxygen and radiation. There is some kind of sensor disruption coming from the damaged area, which is enough to shield life-signs deep inside the structure.

JANEWAY

[Frowns] Sensor disruption? Caused by what?

SEVEN thinks for a moment. She then nods to herself and turns to JANEWAY

SEVEN

Borg records from the Destroyer incursion 200 millennia ago also indicate that wreckage from Destroyer attacks disrupt subspace sensors. [Pauses as she thinks hard] No explanation was determined at the time.

KIM

[Upbeat] Another mystery to solve!

SEVEN

[Looks at KIM with a raised brow] Hopefully, Lieutenant.

CHAKOTAY

Captain, I would like to lead an Away Team across to the station and check for survivors. Our tricorders should be more effective at close range than our sensors can be from a distance.

JANEWAY

Absolutely not, Commander. That structure is battle debris. There could be unexploded ordinance, auto-defence systems and who knows what else. Boarding that thing is an unjustifiable risk.

CHAKOTAY

[Horrified] Captain, there could be people over there!

JANEWAY

[Cold] I have made my decision, Commander.

SEVEN

Captain, aside from the possibility of survivors, the Adronai station may yield intact data nodes or other information sources that will provide critical first-hand data regarding contemporary Destroyer combat systems and tactics.

JANEWAY looks at SEVEN thoughtfully. She starts playing with her com-badge again.

JANEWAY

So, you are saying that the potential benefits outweigh the risks.

SEVEN

No, Captain, I am merely pointing out that there are possible advantages to boarding the station besides our moral responsibility to any survivors.

CHAKOTAY looks surprised and pleased. JANEWAY frowns in displeasure and throws herself down in her chair.

JANEWAY

[Rueful] Alright, I know when I'm beaten. Assemble your team, Commander.

CHAKOTAY

Paris, Seven, Tuvok and Kim, you're with me. [Looks up] Lieutenant Torres, report to Transporter Room 2. Bring a full diagnostic kit with you, we may need to salvage some alien technology.

TORRES (v/o)

[Surprised] Aye, sir.

CHAKOTAY, PARIS, KIM and SEVEN enter the TURBOLIFT as relief crewmembers take the Helm Tactical and Ops stations.

FADE

ACT 2

F/X " The _VOYAGER_ is hovering in the asteroid field near the Adronai STATION.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's Log: Stardate 53916.7. Commander Chakotay is leading an away team over to a space station we have encountered in the wreckage of the Adronai home system. Aside from the possibility of survivors, Seven of Nine feels confident that we may be able to salvage some data on the Destroyers from the wreckage. I hope that this is worth the risk.

INT. CORRIDOR, ADRONAI SPACE STATION

The Corridor is a basic rectangular shape with slightly convex walls. Standard touch-screen controls in an alien style line the walls. The whole set is illuminated in a smoky red light with flickering yellow and blue lights flashing on and off. Several overhead and wall-mounted cable runs have collapsed, spilling pipes and cables into the corridor. Several of these are sparking or leaking goo.

CHAKOTAY, SEVEN, TUVOK, KIM, PARIS and TORRES materialise in the middle of the corridor. They are wearing the new TACTICAL ARMOUR costume (basic moulded grey-white plastic covering chest, shoulders, lower legs and lower arms. Basic helmet with eyepiece-style sensor display and laser spot on the side with the eyepiece. They are carrying PHASER IIIR phaser rifles.

After materialisation, TUVOK, PARIS and SEVEN crouch. All six swing up their phasers and sweep the corridor professionally. KIM pulls out his tricorder.

KIM

No life-signs within 20 metre radius, commander. I'm not reading any power emissions beyond a local emergency back-up system.

CHAKOTAY nods and looks around. He seems a little nervous. All SIX switches on powerful torches mounted on the left shoulder of their armour.

CHAKOTAY

Alright, Kim, Paris, Tuvok, secure this corridor. B'Elanna, Seven, let's see if we can get anything from the computer system.

TORRES slings her rifle and walks to the nearest interface panel. She touches a few controls and gets nothing. She pulls out her tricorder and presses a few buttons. TORRES frowns before reporting.

TORRES

It looks like the main system and the power net are both down, Commander. We'll have to try to power up the local sub-processor using a power converter.

CHAKOTAY nods in agreement. SEVEN shoulders her rifle and joins TORRES. SEVEN hands TORRES a large piece of equipment (POWER CONVERTER).

SEVEN

[Dryly] When the Captain separated me from the Collective, I expected never to perform an assimilation again.

TORRES is shocked and looks up at SEVEN. SEVEN raises an eyebrow, a slight smile quirking at the corner of her mouth.

TORRES

This isn't assimilation, Seven. It is salvage. By the way, you are

NOT funny.

SEVEN

[Quiet] Not to you, perhaps.

PARIS has taken up position at one end of the corridor; TUVOK is at the other. KIM moves to an alcove with an open door and crouches inside the door. He appears very nervous and keeps checking his tricorder. KIM looks around the darkened room sniffs cautiously. He frowns as he thinks about whatever he can smell. He raises his rifle and looks around using its sights.

POV - KIM's RIFLE SIGHTS. Use plenty of psychedelic colours. This is supposed to be a hybrid visual/IR/radar/EM emission read out with some life-form detection capability. A circle in the centre shows the aiming point. The SIGHTS sweep around the room, apparently some kind of storeroom. There is a desk with a computer terminal and several equipment racks with various items scattered on the floor. A large and nondescript lump of matter appears to be lying beside the desk.

KIM frowns in puzzlement and touches a control on the side of the SIGHTS

POV " KIM's RIFLE SIGHTS. The aiming circle moves onto the lump. A series of READINGS flash along the right-hand border of the image then caption appears next to the aiming circle: "MATERIALS ANALYSIS: Proto-organic matter and synthetic fabrics."

KIM is fascinated and stands up. He walks carefully into the room, sweeping around with his rifle. He reaches the desk and shines his torch down. We see an ADRONAI uniform with a large burnt hole right through the upper torso and sticky orange goo leaking out of all the openings. KIM pales visibly.

KIM

[Nauseated] Oh my! [Taps COM-BADGE] Kim to Chakotay!

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

Go ahead, Lieutenant.

KIM

Commander, I've found! Well I'm not sure. I think it might be one of the Adronai crew.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

[Puzzled] You 'think?'

KIM

Yes sir, I think you and Tom should come and see this.

INT. ADRONAI SPACE STATION, STORE ROOM

KIM and CHAKOTAY are standing around the 'body.' PARIS is kneeling

beside it, scanning it with his medical tricorder.

PARIS

Well, I'm picking up all kinds of pre-organic proteins and what seems to be pulverised calcium, but only simpler amino acids no DNA fragments, no ribonucleides, nothing really organic at all. [Folds tricorder, stands and faces CHAKOTAY] If it weren't for the uniform, I would say this thing wasn't anything but a chemical spill, butâ€|

CHAKOTAY

But with the uniform, it looks a bit suggestive.

PARIS

Yes sir.

KIM

[Excited] This could be a goldmine of data, Commander. A full autopsy should tell us a lot about Destroyer weapons technology.

CHAKOTAY

[Surprised] You expect THAT to tell us anything?

KIM

Given time, yes sir.

CHAKOTAY sighs and looks around for a moment. He is obviously loath to move the 'body' and is sceptical as to whether this will do any good.

CHAKOTAY

All right, then. Mr. Paris, beam the corpse to sickbay and help the Doctor with his examination.

PARIS

[Grimaces] Thanks, Chakotay. You've just made my day. [Taps COM-BADGE] Paris to _Voyager_. One person and one piece of potentially hazardous organic cargo to beam directly to sickbay. Have the cargo surrounded by a Level-1 quarantine field.

TRANSPORTER CHIEF (v/o)

Understood, Lieutenant. Establishing quarantine field. The Doctor has been notified sir, energising.

PARIS and the 'BODY' dematerialise.

CHAKOTAY shakes his head.

CHAKOTAY

I have a strange feeling we aren't going to like the results of this examination.

CHAKOTAY and KIM walk out of the room, leaving it in darkness.

INT. SICKBAY

The BODY has just materialised on the main BIO-BED. PARIS is struggling into a BIOHAZARD SUIT as the DOCTOR stands next to the gooey mess and reads his tricorder with an expression of thoughtful concentration.

DOCTOR

Let's hurry it up, Mr. Paris. Replicate a set of chemical analysis sensors while you are at it, I strongly suspect that they will be of more use than traditional forensic tools.

PARIS

[Cocky grin] I'm just worried about that thing leaking on the floor, Doc!

DOCTOR

[Condescending] That is why we call it a "Containment Field."

INT. SICKBAY, LATER

JANEWAY is standing next to THE DOCTOR at the main console while PARIS is having his BIOHAZARD SUIT decontaminated near the main BIO-BED alcove. JANEWAY is staring at the display in disbelief.

The display is an OKUDAGRAM of an Adronai skeleton on one side and the orange goo on the other side, with the location of the calcium deposits highlighted.

JANEWAY

Then you are certain. Thisâ€| residue is an Adronai corpse?

DOCTOR

Yes, Captain. [Smug] It wasn't easy given theâ€| advanced state of decomposition, but I was able to match the location of the calcium deposits with the shape of an Adronai skeleton.

The DOCTOR presses a switch and the two images on the display merge. It is, indeed, a good match.

DOCTOR

If we had reached the body a few hours later, settling effects would have made even that impossible.

JANEWAY

I've never heard of a species where post-mortem decomposition is so complete.

DOCTOR

And you haven't met one yet, Captain. [Gestures at the goo, still on the bio-bed] This is not natural. There is no micro-organisms, no viruses, not even any prions. Whatever caused this caused all the more-complex organic structures in the subject to break down at the molecular level.

JANEWAY

[Horrified] What can do that?

PARIS has completed decontamination. He exits the force field and pulls off his hood.

PARIS

Destroyer weapons can.

DOCTOR

We found an energy signature in the body similar to the one that Lt. Torres has found in the hull of the space station. This is definitely a weapon effect.

PARIS

[Ironic] You've gotta love a species that thinks like this. It not only kills you, but also renders you down to basic chemicals for recycling.

JANEWAY goes pale as she considers this.

DOCTOR

There was an interesting disruption pattern in the, ah, corpse too, Captain.

The DOCTOR presses a control and the OKUDAGRAM changes to a side view showing the chest area of the BODY. There are what look like concentric shock waves radiating out from the entry wound. The DOCTOR points out these features as he continues

DOCTOR

Some aspect of the energy of the weapon seems to create a displacement in matter. As you can see, it caused the victim's molecules to migrate away from the impact wound. The closer to the impact point, the greater the displacement. The victim was not wearing any kind of armour, but it would not have done him any good.

JANEWAY

Some kind of armour piercing effect. I wonder how they did it.

PARIS

It seems to be an inherit feature of their weapons.

JANEWAY looks at PARIS, who shrugs

PARIS

I've been keeping touch with the Away Team. From what Harry tells me of what they have found on the station, it is almost a vibrational or harmonic effect. It literally pushes inorganic materials aside and then vibrates you into sludge. [Grim] As Seven said, it is very efficient.

JANEWAY

[Almost deathly calm] Is there any way to stop it?

DOCTOR

That, Captain, is the province of engineers.

PARIS

[Grim] We have to know what it is first.

JANEWAY remains coldly detached. She looks once more at the display, then looks up at the 'corpse.'

JANEWAY

If you've finished, Doctor, beam thatâ€¦ residueâ€¦ overboard.

DOCTOR

There are certain niceties involved in Adronai funeral rites, Captain; it will take a few minutes.

JANEWAY

[Harsh] Who will know or care if you performed the rites, Doctor? Just clear that bed for the living.

PARIS

[Horrified] Captain, this was a sentient being.

JANEWAY gives PARIS a deadly look.

JANEWAY

There are probably no more Adronai left, Tom. We don't have the time to waste.

PARIS continues to stare, his open, innocent face seems to radiate disapproval, while The DOCTOR starts sorting out his medical instruments nervously. When the Lieutenant does not relent, JANEWAY looks away, almost ashamed at her heartlessness.

JANEWAY

[Sighs] Alright, perform the rites, Tom. Not just for one crewman, but for an entire species.

JANEWAY's shoulders slump as she exits SICKBAY.

PARIS

I'm worried about her.

DOCTOR

She has a lot on her mind, Mr. Paris.

PARIS

It's more than that I think. It's almost as if she is afraid to feel anything for what is happening. I'll catch you later, Doc.

Before The DOCTOR can object, PARIS exits SICKBAY. The DOCTOR slumps slightly.

DOCTOR

[Annoyed] I'm a Doctor, not a funeral director. [Sigh] But sometimes I think the two jobs overlap.

The DOCTOR turns back to his console to call up the data on Adronai funeral rites.

INT. _VOYAGER _CORRIDOR

JANEWAY stalks down the corridor, looking rather rattled. PARIS rushes to catch up.

PARIS

Hey, Captain! Wait up!

JANEWAY pauses at this rather non-regulation form of address. She plasters on her best smile and turns to face PARIS

JANEWAY

What can I do for you, Tom?

PARIS

[Suddenly nervous] I'm wondering if, you know, need to talk to someone about something?

JANEWAY

[Sighs] Et tu, Tom?

PARIS

[Puzzled] Ma'am?

JANEWAY smiles at PARIS' confusion.

JANEWAY

Commander Chakotay seems to think I need to talk to someone about something, too. I'm fine, Tom. I just feel the need to focus on this unexpected war we've found ourselves involved in.

PARIS

Well, with respect Captain, I'm not sure if I believe that.

JANEWAY's brows shoot up. She obviously does not know whether to explode or to laugh aloud at PARIS' insubordination.

JANEWAY

[Quiet and dangerous] What was that, Mr. Paris?

PARIS

[Slight smirk at getting a response] I've seen you focussed before, Captain. If you don't mind me saying so, you are a little too good at it for it to be entirely healthy. But I've never, never, seen you soâ€¦ determinedly callous.

JANEWAY

I'm not sure where this is supposed to be going, Lieutenant.

PARIS

You are acting as if you only care about results, not the consequences. That isn't like you. You are acting like a machine, Captain, and I am worried about you.

JANEWAY

[Firm] What is it with this crew? Do I have to be all touchy-feely to be healthy? This is war, Mr. Paris. It is time that this crew realises that in war you have to drop useless emotional impediments and concentrate on victory.

PARIS

With respect, Ma'am, what you are showing isn't focus. It's more like obsession. You have to remember what people feel, or you will lose the ability to act as a commander.

JANEWAY

So speaks a man who has been reduced to the ranks twice for gross misconduct. If you are an example of listening to feelings, Mister, I don't want any part of it!

PARIS shakes his head sadly.

PARIS

Don't try to avoid this by attacking me, Captain. Concentrate on your

own problem.

JANEWAY

[Acid] And what is my problem, pray tell?

PARIS

How to remain strong without losing your soul.

PARIS turns and walks away. JANEWAY stands, shaking with outrage. She storms off down the corridor and barges onto a turbolift

INT. TURBOLIFT

JANEWAY stands in the lift, her eyes sparkling with fury.

JANEWAY

Bridge!

The doors close and the lift starts off. JANEWAY sighs loudly and leans against the bulkhead in exhaustion. She hugs herself and starts to shake violently.

JANEWAY

[Quiet] Come on, Kathryn! Stay strong! stay focussed! I can't afford to slip now!

FADE

ACT 3

INT. VOYAGER " LT. WILDMAN'S QUARTERS

Samantha WILDMAN and NAOMI are in the centre of the room. WILDMAN is reading a PADD while NAOMI is involved with something on the DESKTOP TERMINAL. NAOMI is her usual serious self.

NAOMI

[Worried] Mom, I've been thinking!

WILDMAN

About what, honey?

NAOMI

These new aliens! Are they monsters?

WILDMAN tries to repress a smile.

WILDMAN

No, Naomi, they're not monsters. They are different from us. They have been travelling in space far longer and have far more advanced technology. [More thoughtful] I'm sure that they don't even really

think like us, but they aren't monsters.

NAOMI turns around. She is obviously quite rattled.

NAOMI

You were on the bridge, though? During the battle?

WILDMAN

[Gentle] That's right.

NAOMI

Is it true that they wouldn't talk to us? That they fired on the _Voyager_ even though they didn't know who we are?

WILDMAN

[Reluctant] Wellâ€¦

NAOMI

You see? Only monsters act that way! No wonder Seven is scared of them!

NAOMI seems on the verge of tears.

NAOMI

I'm scared too, Mom. I'm afraid that they are going to try to blow us up.

WILDMAN walks over and gathers her into her arms. She tries to reassure NAOMI.

WILDMAN

Shh. Don't worry, Naomi. I won't let anything bad happen to you.

NAOMI

[Sobbing] But what if you can't stop them?

WILDMAN

We _will_ stop them, honey. Mommy promises.

BRIEF close-up on WILDMAN's face. If anything, she seems more afraid than NAOMI is.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The STARFIELD is empty for a moment. Then with the characteristic shimmer of distortion, a TIAMAT-class dreadnought de-cloaks before us. Its' huge spines spread like the struts of a solar sailing ship, the mighty warship soars past us.

Suddenly, the ship seems to pause in space as if it is pausing to think. Suddenly, it quarter-rotates directly towards us and screams toward us at full power.

A small pod drops from the belly of the TIAMAT as it cruises past. Our POV tracks the huge ship as it passes by. In the background, we see the SUPERNOVA REMNANT. The pod extends six spines, equally spread around the base and shoots forward. It is quickly lost in the distance as the TIAMAT continues relentlessly onward towards the Adronai System.

INT. MESS HALL

NEELIX is pottering about behind the counter while several CREWMEN sit around in small groups, obviously taking a break between assignments.

NEELIX (v/o)

Morale Officer's Log: stardate 53917.2. We have been holding station in the Adronai System for about a standard day now. While the Captain has moved us down to Yellow Alert, the crew remains tense. Frankly, I can't blame them. The sheer malicious power of the Destroyers has brought back terrible memories of Rinax. Still, as Morale Officer, it's my job to help people forget their worries!

NEELIX walks around the counter to a table where Tom PARIS, two Ensigns, MEGAN and JENNY Delaney are sitting. PARIS is reading a PADD and the normally verbose Delaneys are quiet.

NEELIX

And what can I do for you today?

PARIS

Just coffee for me, Neelix.

MEGAN

Same here.

NEELIX

And what about you, Ms. Delaney?

JENNY

Oh, yeah. Coffee, [mischievous smile] and one of those great Arcturan Muffins I see parked on your counter.

NEELIX

Coming right up friends! [Walks away, adds quietly to himself] I wonder if I should tell Jenny that they are Talaxian rock cakes— oh well, she won't notice.

As NEELIX gets their order together, PARIS turns to MEGAN.

PARIS

So, how's Seven been doing, Jenny? Any more flashbacks?

MEGAN

[Grins] I don't know, Tom. Why don't you ask my sister?

PARIS goes red, causing the Delaneys to giggle in a disturbing mirror-image style. Before he can ask, JENNY answers his question.

JENNY

Well, she's been fine when I've seen her, Tom. Still, you've spent more time with her recently over on the derelict.

PARIS

[Pensive] Yeah, I know. I guess I was hopingâ€¦

PARIS looks very worried. Obviously he had hoped to hear something very positive.

JENNY

Yeah, I'm rattled too, Tom. [Suggestive] Want to comfort me?

MEGAN

[Shocked] Jenny!

JENNY

Look, Megan, don't tell me you haven't worked it out. Those things are millions of years in advance of us and the Captain still wants to take them on! I justâ€¦ [Begins to cry] I just don't want to die alone.

MEGAN reaches out for her sister, but JENNY jumps up and flees, running right past a surprised NEELIX.

MEGAN

[Shout] Jenny, wait!

JENNY stops and sags slightly. MEGAN puts her arm around her sister's shoulders.

MEGAN

We are not going to die Jenny. We've beaten the Borg, faced down the Kazon, the Hirogen and the Vidiians. [Shaky smile] This 'we will destroy you' thing is getting a little old now, don't you think?

JENNY manages a slight laugh. MEGAN leads her back to the table. NEELIX comes over with the requested refreshments, looking a little

relieved.

F/X " ASTEROID BELT. SURFACE OF A MEDIUM-SIZED ASTEROID

The POD drops out of warp and glides to the surface, transforming into an insectoid six-legged walker with bug-eyed sensors (a.k.a. "The ROACH").

POV rotates. In the middle distance, we can see the _VOYAGER_ hovering in front of the Adronai STATION. The ROACH observes for a moment. Two antennae extend from its back for a moment.

SOUNDS " Very fast digital data burst.

The ROACH folds its antennas. It lifts off the asteroid with a blue glow of thrusters and scoots towards the _VOYAGER_.

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY is in her chair. TUVOK is at tactical. Anonymous ENSIGNS man Ops and Conn and CHAKOTAY is in discussion with the ENSIGN at Ops.

No one seems to be aware of the presence of the ROACH.

F/X " EXT. VOYAGER HULL.

The ROACH extends its legs and lands delicately on the hull. It waves its sensors around and begins to scuttle along the surface.

INT. MESS HALL

NEELIX is trying to cheer JENNY up with some chatter. PARIS is enjoying his coffee while looking at his PADD. He notices movement out of one of the windows. He looks up. Nothing there. NEELIX sees movement too. He walks over to the window.

NEELIX

[Amazed] Stars and galaxies!

The ROACH is standing just below the line of the window. As NEELIX looks, it scuttles up onto the window and looks in at him with its two-eyed 'head.' We can now see that the ROACH is about the size of a large dog.

PARIS looks up and jumps.

PARIS

Hot damn!

JENNY gasps and MEGAN gives a shriek of horror. Everyone jumps up, but seem not to be able to decide what to do.

PARIS

Paris to Bridge, intruder alert! There is some kind of robot probe sitting on the outer hull outside the Mess Hall!

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY looks up with a start. She turns to TUVOK.

JANEWAY

Tuvok?

TUVOK works his console.

TUVOK

Sensors detect no foreign matter on the hull.

PARIS (v/o)

[Loud] Then come down here, Tuvok! The blasted thing is sitting right outside window three!

F/X " Outer hull, outside the MESS HALL.

We can see PARIS and NEELIX staring through the window. The ROACH seems to have been as surprised as they are. After a moment, it lifts off and jets away on its thrusters.

INT. BRIDGE

PARIS (v/o)

Bridge, its moving off, heading at about plus sixty degrees vertical and hard on the starboard beam.

TUVOK

Working. Captain, the sensors are detecting motion against the stellar background. There are no other sensor returns.

JANEWAY

Red alert!

LIGHTS and SOUND " Red Alert

JANEWAY

Let's see it, Mr. Tuvok.

F/X - VIEWSCREEN " A poor-quality image of the ROACH in flight.

TUVOK (v/o)

The target appears to be some manner of remote reconnaissance device. It is almost perfectly sensor shielded. I can only read its silhouette against the background.

INT. BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY almost runs back to his station. The TURBOLIFT opens and

PARIS runs to his station.

CHAKOTAY

I wonder how long it's been out there?

JANEWAY

One thing's for certain. The Destroyers know we're here. Mr. Tuvok, take it out.

F/X " The VOYAGER fires its main upper starboard phaser bank at the ROACH. The shields are fully illuminated, but the little probe does not seem to have taken damage.

INT. BRIDGE

TUVOK

The probe's shielding has absorbed the blast. No detectable damage.

CHAKOTAY

It's moving off at speed, Captain. We'll lose visual contact in a few seconds.

JANEWAY

[Determined] Pursuit course, Mr. Paris. Full ahead. Chakotay, notify the away teams.

F/X " The ROACH folds up into its POD configuration and accelerates. In the background, the VOYAGER tilts up its nose and accelerates towards the fleeing POD. It fires a phaser blast, but the shot goes wide.

INT. BRIDGE

TUVOK checks his console.

TUVOK.

Captain, we cannot get a targeting lock. Additionally, the probe's shields are far more powerful than seems possible in a unit of that size.

JANEWAY

[Firm] Keep firing, Tuvok. Target the blasts manually.

TUVOK

That engagement profile has only minimal chances of

JANEWAY turns to look at TUVOK

JANEWAY

[Firm] Why aren't you firing, Mister?

TUVOK

[Chastened] Firing on manual, Captain.

F/X â€" POV looking forward from one side of the VOYAGER's port nacelle. The VOYAGER fires two bursts: one from the main upper starboard array, one from the lower port array. One shot hits the POD and one misses. The POD fires two electric blue pulses. Both hit the shields.

INT. BRIDGE

Everyone rocks and rolls from the impact.

CHAKOTAY

[Amazed] Shields down 15%.

TUVOK

Curious. The first shot from the alien probe was completely ineffective, however the second caused damage completely out of proportion to its apparent energy level.

JANEWAY

You can analyse this on your own time, Mr. Tuvok! Continue firing.

TUVOK taps his console, programming a new firing sequence.

F/X â€" The POD flies past us as the VOYAGER begins to fire alternately from its upper starboard and lower port arrays, then from its lower starboard, upper port and ventral arrays.

POV follows the POD past. Approximately half the VOYAGER's shots strike the POD. As the VOYAGER comes into shot from the right, three shots connect at once and the POD explodes.

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY sighs and relaxes.

JANEWAY

Nice shooting, Tuvok. Mr. Paris, get us back to the derelict, maximum speed.

PARIS

Yes, Ma'am.

CHAKOTAY's eyes widen as he sees something on the centre console.

CHAKOTAY

Captain, before we destroyed the probe it transmitted an extremely high-power data burst. We are picking a warp signature coming from

the direction of the signal's target!

JANEWAY's eyes widen too.

TUVOK

Captain, we have established that Destroyer sensors are at a disadvantage in areas where there is a great deal of sensor 'clutter' and there are no power emissions to track. If the _Voyager_ were to land on a suitable asteroid and power downâ€¦

JANEWAY

[Relieved] We might remain undetected. Nice thinking, Tuvok.

CHAKOTAY

Captain, the Destroyers are certain to detect away teams on the derelict, but we can't afford the time to beam them back. We can't even risk transmitting a warning. I would like to take a heavily armed security squad over and re-enforce them.

JANEWAY purses her lips unhappily.

JANEWAY

I don't like it, Chakotayâ€¦ But you're right. Select your squad and beam over immediately.

CHAKOTAY

Yes, Captain. Tuvok, I will need your five best security officers.

CHAKOTAY heads to the TURBOLIFT. PARIS and TUVOK move to follow.

CHAKOTAY

[Kind] Gentlemen, you are not on the team. [They are about to object; he interrupts] I know how you feel, but the ship needs you both here.

CHAKOTAY enters the TURBOLIFT, leaving two very unhappy senior officers. Three, if you count a worried Captain JANEWAY.

ACT 4

INT. ADRONAI SPACE STATION â€" NETWORK NEXUS

The room is an equipment-choked computer maintenance centre. TORRES and SEVEN are working on powering up the local sub-processor using a power converter. Torres suddenly whoops in victory.

TORRES

Start up completed! At last we've got the blasted thing working!

SEVEN

[Calm] It remains to be seen if the data nodes are still complete.

TORRES

[Annoyed] Seven, will you please lighten up? Given the amount of damage this station has suffered, just completing a system start up is an achievement!

CHAKOTAY and two GUARDS materialise behind them. TORRES starts in surprise when she notices that they are in full tactical regalia.

Before TORRES can speak, CHAKOTAY taps his com-badge.

CHAKOTAY

Chakotay to all away teams. Rendezvous back at the network nexus immediately and maintain communications silence. I repeat, report to back to the network nexus and maintain communications silence.

CHAKOTAY gestures to the GUARDS who move carefully out into the corridor, keeping an eye out for trouble.

CHAKOTAY

All right, B'Elanna, Seven. Tidy up your tools, we are getting out of here.

TORRES

[Astounded] We've only just gotten into the system, Chakotay! What is going on?

CHAKOTAY

[Grim] We're going to have some company.

INT. VOYAGER BRIDGE

JANEWAY is leaning over PARIS' shoulder.

JANEWAY

Set her down, Tom.

PARIS

Firing docking thrustersâ€¦

F/X â€" The _VOYAGER_ lowers itself against the side of an asteroid, its' landing legs extended.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's Log: stardate 93918.0. The _Voyager_ is in the Adronai

system, examining the results of an attack by Destroyer forces. Unfortunately, the Destroyers have detected our presence. I have moved the ship into the debris field in an attempt to shield us from enemy sensors.

F/X " The _Voyager _touches down. Its nacelles darken and its external and window lights switch off. Our POV rises past the asteroid to show the Adronai STATION. A Destroyer TIAMAT-class Dreadnought is hovering alongside the STATION.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Unfortunately, we had insufficient time to withdraw our investigation teams from the Adronai space station we discovered amongst the debris. Commander Chakotay has led a security force on to the station in an attempt to re-enforce our away teams in case the Destroyers board the station.

INT. BRIDGE

The lights dim down to emergency blue and a tired-looking JANEWAY sits in her chair.

JANEWAY (v/o)

From what we have learned of their weapons over the last few days our teams would not stand much of a chance against them.

INT. ADRONAI STATION. CORRIDOR

The area has several collapsed wall panels and bulkheads, giving it a thoroughly wrecked look. The illumination is erratic and flickering. A TECHNICIAN has just finished connecting a series of cables to a damaged POWER CONDUIT.

A SECURITY CREWMAN rushes up.

SECURITY OFFICER

[Urgent] Bill, come on! The Commander meant 'now,' you know.

The TECHNICIAN begins to pack his tools.

TECH

All right, all right! I had to get this finished or Lieutenant Torres would kill me!

SECURITY OFFICER

[Grim] I don't think she is the one you have to worry about!

There is a sudden metallic 'CLANK' from somewhere. The SECURITY OFFICER whips up his phaser rifle and scans the corridor with the aiming sensor.

SECURITY OFFICER

What was that?

The TECHNICIAN draws his phaser pistol and begins scanning with his tricorder.

TECHNICIAN

I'm not picking anything up. [Touches a control] Sensor readings are confused, almost as if there is some kind of jamming field at work.

They are both nervous. They back up against the wall where the TECHNICIAN has been performing repairs. There are more noises that sound like something sharp clicking on metal. Then other noises. Unearthly and distorted noises like howls.

TECHNICIAN

I do NOT like this.

SECURITY OFFICER

Come on, let's move.

The SECURITY OFFICER moves forward a few paces, sweeping the corridor with his phaser rifle, the TECHNICIAN following him.

The freshly repaired wall suddenly smashes open with a shower of sparks. A shadowy stick figure-like apparition is visible in the erratic lighting. It grabs the TECHNICIAN and throws him right at the camera. The technician falls from sight.

SECURITY OFFICER

[Shouts] Bill! You bastard!

The SECURITY OFFICER swings around towards the FIGURE in the hole-in-the-wall. He raises his rifle, but it slaps the gun out of his hands. He goes for his phaser pistol. The FIGURE rears up; raising two more arms and grabs the SECURITY OFFICER by the arms and legs. It lifts him up and slams him hard against the ground with a crunch of shattering bone.

The TECHNICIAN has just pulled himself to his feet. He raises his phaser pistol.

TECHNICIAN

Eat this you freak!

The phaser fires, momentarily illuminating the corridor in a surreal yellow-gold shade. For a moment, we see the FIGURE as an insectoid with white armour. Two legs are perched on the edge of the hole it has made and four clawed arms are in the air. When the phaser hits, the lower pair of arms grips the edge of the hole to steady the creature. Apart from a momentary unsteadiness, the phaser blast has no other effect. The upper right arm goes over its shoulder and draws what may be a weapon.

TECHNICIAN

Shit!

The TECHNICIAN takes a step back. The creature fires his weapon. A single electric blue pulse of light flashes across the gap and blows the TECHNICIAN against the wall and down. All we can see is his hand sticking up out of the bottom of the frame.

In the erratic illumination, the four-legged creature moves smoothly out of the hole. We cannot see many details in these conditions, but it is clearly about seven feet high and has multi-jointed limbs.

The SECURITY OFFICER groans. The creature looks down. A deadly triangular blade flashes in its upper left hand and comes down with utter finality.

After a moment, several other creatures join it. They exchange comments in a language that sounds like a combination of hisses, howls and squeaks. They are DESTROYER marines.

As the DESTROYERS move away, the TECHNICIAN's hand begins to move downwards, losing shape, as if the corpse isâ€¦ melting_.

INT. STATION, CORRIDOR

Lieutenant KIM is walking hurriedly along the corridor along with an engineering CREW-WOMAN and two SECURITY GUARDS. Like most parts of the station, the corridor is only dimly illuminated. The GUARDS are sweeping the corridor efficiently.

GUARD ONE

Lieutenant! I'm picking up movement at bearing 225, our level. Range is about 25 metres and closing.

KIM pauses and looks in the appropriate direction (towards the Camera). He pulls out his tricorder and scans for a moment.

KIM

Nothing. It is as if something were jamming most sensing frequencies.

There are the same unearthly howls we heard earlier.

KIM

[Firm] Whatever it is, it isn't friendly. [Gestures other direction down corridor] Let's take this route.

KIM sets off, the CREW-WOMAN in tow. The GUARDS look at each other nervously and back up after them, keeping the corridor covered.

INT. STATION, CORRIDOR

KIM and the CREW-WOMAN round a corner. Both pause in horror.

KIM

[Amazed] What the hellâ€¦

An electric-blue energy pulse strikes the CREW-WOMAN, blasting her back down the corridor.

KIM and the GUARDS fire back. There is an unearthly SCREECH and an energy pulse zips past KIM and blows out about two square metres of wall.

KIM

Damn! [Turns] The other way! Move it!

KIM and the GUARDS flee. The shadowy shapes of DESTROYER Marines charge down the corridor after them.

INT. STATION, CORRIDOR, OUTSIDE NETWORK NEXUS

It is obvious that only a few minutes have passed since we last saw the core team.

TORRES

All right Chakotay, we're packed. I warn you though: if this is a false alarm, I am going to kick your butt all the way back to the Alpha Quadrant!

CHAKOTAY

[Smiles] If this is a false alarm, B'Elanna, I will be one happy kicke.

One of the GUARDS interrupts this charming scene.

GUARD THREE

[Urgent] Commander! I read five, no seven motion traces coming down the north corridor. Range is twenty metres and dropping _very_ quickly.

CHAKOTAY's head snaps to the appropriate direction. New POV angle behind the team, looking in the right direction. Everyone raises their phasers and watches nervously.

KIM suddenly runs around the corner of the corridor, followed by two GUARDS

KIM

[Loud and panicked] Oh Shiiiiit!

Something BIG AND SCARY throws a dramatic stick-puppet shadow on the corridor wall behind KIM. All three fleeing Starfleet personnel turn around and fire their phasers at the indistinct insectoid shape. A quartet of electric-blue energy pulses come the other way and one blows the first GUARD off his feet.

KIM

[Shouts, breathless] Chakotay! There are four hostiles coming up the corridor!

CHAKOTAY

Down the side corridor! Move!

EVERYONE dives down the SIDE CORRIDOR opposite the NETWORK NEXUS door. CHAKOTAY and GUARD FOUR remain in the MAIN CORRIDOR, laying down fire with their phaser rifles as KIM AND GUARD TWO run up and dive for cover.

CHAKOTAY and GUARD FOUR dive for cover, too just as an energy bolt blows out a long chunk of the wall near the corridor junction.

The SIDE CORRIDOR is short and ends in an apparently sealed doorway.

KIM

Its' incredible, Chakotay, their armour can take a maximum power phaser hit without damage! I've never seen anything like it!

CHAKOTAY nods grimly. He gestures to the three remaining GUARDS. CHAKOTAY and GUARD THREE lean around the corner and start firing. GUARD TWO and FOUR dive back into the Network Nexus room. CHAKOTAY and GUARD THREE duck back into cover as a series of energy bolts rip up the corridor wall.

CHAKOTAY

[Ironic] Persistent, aren't they?

SEVEN

[Grim] In previous encounters, Destroyer ground troops have continued to attack until either they have achieved all of their objectives or they have all been destroyed.

CHAKOTAY

Let's hope we can make it the latter, Seven.

CHAKOTAY looks at the two GUARDS opposite. He raises his hand and counts down. Three, two, one, he pulls his fist down. All four duck out and begin firing their phaser rifles down the corridor. Brief shot of the junction with golden pulses erupting from both doorway and side corridor.

Suddenly several blue energy pulses shoot back. One hits GUARD FOUR in the head, blowing him out of cover and along the main corridor. Another strikes the corridor wall above CHAKOTAY's head, tearing a long gouge out of the material. The resulting explosion blows GUARD THREE back against the back wall with a yell of pain.

TORRES and KIM rush forward. KIM scans the forward GUARD with his tricorder. The man's face is a pincushion of shrapnel and is covered with blood. KIM opens a medikit and lifts up a hypospray.

KIM

Its' a combination anaesthetic and antiseptic.

The GUARD nods weakly and KIM injects him.

TORRES

[Now full-Klingon mode] The p'taqs will NOT win.

TORRES grabs the fallen GUARD's phaser rifle and takes his place. The gouge in the wall makes a convenient knothole. SEVEN pulls her phaser pistol and dives out into the corridor, rolling to a stop in mid-corridor, a Destroyer energy bolt shrieking overhead.

SEVEN

[Shouts] Aim for the neck!

CHAKOTAY

[Shouts back] Fire!

POV up the CORRIDOR. Two DESTROYERS are advancing down, moving smoothly on six limbs, hunkered down and using their lower arms as extra feet. They are sweeping the area in front of them with their energy weapons. Three golden pulses and a beam converge on the first DESTROYER. There is a shower of sparks and the alien goes down without a sound.

The second DESTROYER begins to back up. At the end of the corridor, its two comrades come out of cover and lay down suppressive fire. Everyone ducks into cover except SEVEN, who covers her head and tries to melt into the floor.

The second DESTROYER turns to run for cover. CHAKOTAY leans out.

CHAKOTAY

Again!

Another converging quartet of phaser blasts blows the second DESTROYER's head clean off. The alien goes down. The remaining DESTROYERS dive into cover. All goes quiet.

There is a long pause and then TORRES raises her rifle over her head and shouts with glee.

TORRES

{Shouts} Q'apla!

There are a few ragged cheers. CHAKOTAY closes his eyes for a moment and sighs deeply before giving his orders.

CHAKOTAY

Easy people! B'Elanna! You and Higgins keep watch on the corridor, they may try again. [TORRES nods and takes her post] Kim, scan for any more boarding parties. I can't believe they would only send four

troops after us.

SEVEN

[Dry] In the past, small numbers have proven sufficient, Commander.

CHAKOTAY looks daggers at SEVEN. She looks down in embarrassment.

CHAKOTAY

Your job, Seven, is to access that special data you have on the enemy and find a way for us to disappear. They will pull out if there is no more stragglers to kill.

SEVEN nods in agreement and begins to think. KIM finishes his scan.

KIM

I'm not picking up any more movement, Commander. They may have beamed back to their ship. Considering the fact we didn't pick them up when they transported overâ€¦

SEVEN looks to the end of the side corridor and gasps.

Her POV. The corridor is empty, then there is an oval area filled with a blue-green rippling effect like the rippling of a disturbed pond. The ripples take a tall insectoid shape and a Destroyer solder stands before us.

SEVEN

[Panicked] Commander!

CHAKOTAY

Spirits!

TORRES looks around and starts in shock.

TORRES

Kahless' hand!

We get our first really good look at a DESTROYER. It is seven feet tall, dressed in white body armour with black flexible joints. It has a segmented five-part body with four three-jointed legs like a preying mantis. The two-part upper body has several bits of glowing electronics attached, either sensors or defensive shield generators. A black, snub-nosed energy rifle is mounted behind its upper right shoulder, just the heavy handgrip visible from the front. Each upper segment has a pair of arms. The upper pair ends in graceful three-fingered, two-thumbbed manipulators with cruel claws. The lower pair ends in stubby four-fingered one-thumbbed manipulators. After a long, graceful neck is a heart-shaped head covered with a helmet. Two bulging darkened transparencies cover its eyes and possibly antennae.

TORRES moves instantly. She charges forward and delivers a sweeping blow to the face with the butt of her rifle. The rifle's butt shatters on impact and the DESTROYER sweeps her aside with a single blow. There is a moment of chaos. There is a musical metallic 'CLICK' and a long, cruelly serrated triangular blade appears in the creature's upper right hand. CHAKOTAY moves towards the alien soldier. The GUARD in the Network Nexus room raises his rifle.

GUARD TWO

Commander! Get down!

CHAKOTAY ducks and a phaser pulse hits the DESTROYER in the head. There is no discernible effect. KIM jumps at the Destroyer and tries to wrestle with the creature. With almost contemptuous ease, the alien grabs KIM with his lower arms and throws him down the corridor, narrowly missing SEVEN. KIM hits the second GUARD and the two go down in a tangle of arms and legs.

TORRES comes up, wielding a D'ktag knife. Chakotay has his own Starfleet-issue survival knife. The two advance on the DESTROYER, which hunkers down, all four arms raised, ready for a fight.

SEVEN is about to join her two colleagues when the second DESTROYER lopes down the corridor. She swivels efficiently and blasts the creature with her phaser. She scores a direct hit, but it does no good. KIM and the second GUARD have recovered. They jump on to this new threat. There is a moment's fierce struggle before KIM is swept with stunning force against the doorframe. GUARD TWO raises his rifle. The DESTROYER sweeps its upper right arm down, knocking the phaser's muzzle downwards. It sweeps its lower right arm, gripping one of the triangular attack blades, upwards slicing through the body armour to cut the GUARD open from hip to shoulder.

The GUARD screams and goes down, blood fountaining out of the wound. The DESTROYER turns to attack KIM, but finds SEVEN standing right in front of it, her phaser in her left hand and pressed to its throat.

SEVEN

[Dry, almost reciting] Species 704: quadrupedal insectoid with multiple psionic senses. Target join between cerebral armour and flexible neck joint with maximum-power phaser blast at minimum range. Death instantaneous.

SEVEN fires and falls back with a shriek of pain, golden energy crackling over her left arm. The phaser falls to the ground and begins to melt, glowing brightly. The DESTROYER makes a noise like a growl and advances on the fallen Borg woman.

KIM

Hey! Ugly!

The DESTROYER turns to face KIM as he smashes a phaser rifle into its head. The rifle shatters uselessly and the DESTROYER shoves KIM backwards.

Simultaneously, TORRES gets an opening and tries to shove her D'ktag

into one of the joins in the other DESTROYER's armour. Her blade shatters on contact and the alien grabs her. It flings her over its shoulder and she crashes heavily into the door at the end of the corridor.

CHAKOTAY moves forward, a determined look darkening his face. He avoids several flailing arms, almost leaps at the DESTROYER and hooks his left arm about its neck. The DESTROYER makes a hissing noise and rears back. It regains self-control and lowers its attack blade towards CHAKOTAY's exposed neck. Suddenly it pauses and makes a strangely querying musical whine.

Close up, CHAKOTAY's knife buried into the upper join of the DESTROYER's torso armour. CHAKOTAY looks the DESTROYER right in the face.

CHAKOTAY

[Smiles nastily] A slow blade penetrates deeper, yes?

With a vicious yank, CHAKOTAY drags the blade along the join. Sticky black ichor pours out. The DESTROYER makes a choking noise and then collapses with a drawn out shriek.

At the join of the corridor, KIM is riding on the remaining DESTROYER's back. It howls loudly and almost twists its torso backwards. It grabs KIM and flings him against the wall. SEVEN jumps forward, carrying a phaser rifle. She throws it at the DESTROYER, which catches it reflexively with its lower pair of arms.

SEVEN

Down!

The DESTROYER looks down at the rifle in patent confusion. POV, looking down at the rifle's power indicator, which is lit red and flashing.

RIFLE COMPUTER

Threeâ€¦ Twoâ€¦ Oneâ€¦

The rifle self-destructs with a bright white flash, throwing the DESTROYER down the corridor. After a moment it rises. Its lower arms are gone and there are several tears in its armour marked with leaking ichor. It draws its energy rifle, sways on its feet for a moment, then collapses with a final-sounding sigh.

SEVEN rushes to KIM as a thoroughly battered TORRES staggers out. CHAKOTAY checks the two fallen GUARDS. One is in a pool of blood and the other has melted into orange goo. CHAKOTAY sighs and turns back into the side corridor. SEVEN helps KIM over to join them.

CHAKOTAY

Seven, now is the time for us to disappear.

SEVEN

I will do what I can, Commander.

F/X â€" VOYAGER BRIDGE VIEWSCREEN

The TIAMAT is moving away from the STATION at medium power.

JANEWAY (v/o)

What is it doing?

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY is standing behind PARIS, watching the viewscreen.

PARIS

[Upbeat] Maybe they're giving up!

JANEWAY turns to the rear stations.

JANEWAY

Tuvok?

TUVOK

Relying entirely on our passive sensor array is limiting our scanning capabilities Captain. [Pause] I can confirm that the Destroyer warship has activated its main weapons systems.

JANEWAY

All stations go to full silent mode!

Around the BRIDGE, the MONITORS go dark and EVERYONE sits tight.

F/X â€" VIEWSCREEN

The TIAMAT flies right over the _Voyager _with an unearthly screech. It flies into the distance and suddenly comes about.

TUVOK (v/o)

Their weapons are about to fire!

JANEWAY

[Firm] At what target, Tuvok?

The Destroyers answer that question. The TIAMAT fires its pulse cannon, the main emitters are in the ten forward-facing 'fangs', but secondary emitters are emplaced along the length of the hull and on the tips of the 'spines.'

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD

The weapons fire screams over the hidden VOYAGER and smash into the STATION. Ripples of green distortion spread out from the bright

orange-white explosions. In seconds there is nothing but a cloud of debris.

INT. BRIDGE

There is an appalled silence.

PARIS

[Horrificed] Oh God noâ€¦ [Choked] B'Elannaâ€¦

JANEWAY

[Whispers] Chakotayâ€¦

TUVOK

The Destroyer vessel is moving off, Captain.

PARIS

[Angry] Shall we power up and pursue, Captain?

JANEWAY sags into her chair. Her expression is blank and lifeless. When she answers, her voice trembles with emotion.

JANEWAY

We can't, Tomâ€¦ We aren't ready yetâ€¦ Iâ€¦

F/X â€" VIEWSCREEN â€" The slowly dispersing wreckage cloud that used to be the STATION.

FADE

ACT 5

INT. BRIDGE

PARIS, TUVOK and JANEWAY are at their respective stations with non-speaking extras at all other positions. TUVOK is checking his sensor array. PARIS is pale and JANEWAY's face is bright red with suppressed emotion.

TUVOK

Captain, the Destroyer warship has gone into transwarp.

JANEWAY

[Apathetic] All right, Mr. Tuvok. [Touches intercom control in centre console] Engineering, commence power-up.

CAREY (v/o)

Aye, Captain.

JANEWAY

Mr. Tuvok, I'll be in my ready room. You have the Bridge.

Without waiting for a reply, JANEWAY storms off the Bridge.

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM.

JANEWAY storms into the room, her face red and angry. She leans against her desk, breathing heavily. There is a long pause before she tries to sit down. When she tries, she fails. Her jaw firm, she walks to the replicator.

JANEWAY

[Snaps] Coffee, plain, black and HOT!

F/X " Coffee replicated.

JANEWAY picks up the coffee. She notices her hands are shaking, making the beverage slosh around in the mug.

JANEWAY

[Quiet] Dammit, no! Must keep calm!

JANEWAY suddenly screams furiously and throws the cup across the room. She sits down hard at her desk.

JANEWAY

Captain's Log, supplemental. Both the survey and the security team assigned to the Adronai Derelict were all lost when a Destroyer warship fired upon the Derelict. [Deep breath] Special commendations are to be added to the personnel files of Seven of Nine, Lieutenants Harry Kim and B'Elanna Torres and [Deep shuddering breath] and Commander Chakotay. I I [Suddenly shouts] Damn it! I can't reduce my friends' deaths to a bloody log entry!

COMPUTER (v/o)

Please re-dictate last sentence!

JANEWAY

[Shouts] Just delete the entire damn supplemental entry!

COMPUTER (v/o)

[Smug] Entry deleted.

JANEWAY

[Angry] I'm going to have B'Elanna overhaul that smug piece of shit! Oh no! I can't because!

Finally, exhausted, JANEWAY lays her head in her folded arms on the desk and begins to cry.

TUVOK (v/o)

Bridge to Captain.

JANEWAY sucks in a breath and takes a moment to restore her composure.

JANEWAY

This had better be good Mr. Tuvok.

It is odd, but TUVOK's normally level voice seems to betray a slight excitement.

TUVOK (v/o)

Captain, we have been scanning the debris field for anything new and while we have not detected any life forms, we have detected five Starfleet com-badge signals. [Beat] They are all within an area of a few square metres.

JANEWAY

[Desperate look] I'm on my way!

JANEWAY bolts for the door.

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY storms out of her READY ROOM.

JANEWAY

Mr. Tuvok, show me what you've found, no on second thoughts don't bother. Transport whatever is attached to those com-badges to sickbay immediately.

TUVOK

[Raises eyebrow] Aye, Captain.

JANEWAY smiles for the first time this episode and turns to PARIS

JANEWAY

Tom, I think the Doctor will need you're help.

PARIS

Yes Ma'am!

You couldn't have gotten PARIS off the bridge faster if you beamed him off.

INT. SICKBAY

JANEWAY enters to a tableau of battered heroism. CHAKOTAY, SEVEN, KIM, TORRES and the second GUARD are all being treated by The DOCTOR and PARIS. If PARIS is spending a little too much time on TORRES' bruises and abrasions, then that is quite understandable.

The DOCTOR is his usual acidic self.

DOCTOR

Well, as usual, it is left to me to patch together you people after another ill-judged stunt.

JANEWAY

Doctor, please.

DOCTOR

All I will say at this juncture, Captain, is that we should be more careful in choosing our battles.

JANEWAY

[Quiet and bitter] I wish that were an option open to us.

JANEWAY turns to CHAKOTAY

JANEWAY

How did you survive that blast?

CHAKOTAY

Ask Seven and B'Elanna, they are the ones that came up with the idea.

JANEWAY turns with a raised brow. SEVEN and TORRES look at each other in embarrassment.

SEVEN and TORRES

[Nearly in unison] It was really just a simple modificationâ€¦

The two women look at each other in surprise and TORRES begins to laugh. SEVEN raises her brow in vexation.

SEVEN

I will submit a full report in due time. Suffice to say that we were able to power up the local Structural Integrity Field generators, using our power converter to create a force field that both protected us from the destruction of the station and kept the area pressurised.

DOCTOR

Unfortunately, they were not able to provide life support. You are all suffering from anoxia. I'm afraid I must confine you all to sickbay for observation for at least the next forty-eightâ€¦

JANEWAY

[Smooth] I'm sorry, Doctor, but that's not an option. Get them on their feet as early as possible.

The DOCTOR stutters and gesticulates at this instruction.

JANEWAY

[Kindly] We're at war, Doctor. If it isn't disabling, I need these people back at their stations.

The DOCTOR frowns in disapproval and turns to PARIS, who is lost in TORRES' eyes.

DOCTOR

Mr. Paris, if it isn't too much trouble?

PARIS

Yeah, Doc?

DOCTOR

[Sighs] 25cc of Triox for all if you please, Tom.

CHAKOTAY submits to his shot and turns to JANEWAY.

CHAKOTAY

It was a near thing, Captain. Those things are more terrifying up close than their technology is in a space battle.

JANEWAY

Well it looks like the away mission was a near total loss. [Sighs] Still, I've gotten most of you back.

CHAKOTAY

[Clears throat] Actually, I have a present for you.

He raises a DESTROYER ENERGY RIFLE and presents it ceremoniously to JANEWAY, who is suitably flabbergasted.

INT. CARGO BAY

The SENIOR CREW and scores of OTHER CREW MEMBERS stand at attention in dress uniform before seven TORPEDO CASINGS, five of which are covered by the FEDERATION FLAG and two by the MAQUIS STANDARD. JANEWAY stands before the crew, suitably sombre as she concludes her funeral oration.

JANEWAY

[Firm] They gave their lives for all of us and for the future of the galaxy at large. The best way we can remember this sacrifice is to pledge ourselves to victory in this war, and a swift return home. In all our efforts to come, we will remember them.

CHAKOTAY

Honours hut!

The CREW stands to attention for a minute's silence.

JANEWAY

[Quiet] Dismissed.

As the CREW disperses, CHAKOTAY puts his hand on JANEWAY's shoulder. She seems to brighten for a moment and covers his hand with her own. She then breaks away and walks off, leaving a puzzled and concerned CHAKOTAY in her wake.

SEVEN watches all hawkishly.

SEVEN

Harry, I am confused. [KIM turns to look at her] I am familiar with the spiritual and social traditions surrounding the disposal of the bodies of the dead. However, the bodies of these seven crewmen were destroyed along with the Adronai derelict. Why have such elaborate ceremonies for empty caskets?

KIM laughs gently.

KIM

Like all these traditions, Seven, this one is more for the benefit of those still alive. People need closure, especially if they knew those lost.

SEVEN watches PARIS and TORRES walk past. TORRES is leaning on PARIS' shoulder, obviously glad for the support.

SEVEN

Yet this 'closure' does not seem to benefit the person emotionally. [Bitter] I feel that I failed these crewmen by not preparing more adequately for facing Destroyer ground troops. I think the relevant emotion is guilt. Should this ceremony not end this?

KIM touches SEVEN on the shoulder.

KIM

There are no quick fixes for human emotions, Seven.

SEVEN

[Quiet] I know.

KIM

What these ceremonies do is allow us to place the past in perspective. Now we have to build the future, bearing in mind what this tragedy has taught us.

SEVEN nods thoughtfully.

SEVEN

Yes, we must perform the analysis of the data we have obtained and adapting our tactical systems to improve our chances of success.

SEVEN turns to leave, then suddenly turns back to face KIM.

SEVEN

[Dry] These deaths have affected me greatly, Harry. Placing them 'in perspective' is very difficult. I thinkâ€¦ [Smiles gently] I think it is easier when you have friends.

SEVEN walks off, leaving behind an amazed KIM. After a moment he smiles and shakes his head before leaving.

JANEWAY emerges from the shadows. Her face is pale and concerned. She walks silently through the CARGO BAY, pausing in front of each CASKET. She touches each one and closes her eyes as if in prayer. Finally, her own farewells said, she pulls her dress uniform tunic straight and leaves the room.

INT. Laboratory

TORRES, KIM, SEVEN and JANEWAY are crowded around the RIFLE, which is hooked up to a mass of diagnostic equipment.

JANEWAY

What do you mean it doesn't have a power pack?

TORRES

[Angry] I mean that we haven't found ANY power source yet. There is nothing that could be a power source.

KIM

B'Elanna, that's impossible. We saw it working and saw that the Destroyer didn't have the time to remove any components.

TORRES

[Quiet] I know its' impossible, Starfleet. Nonetheless, it works!

There is an amazed silence as the four tech-heads absorb this information.

SEVEN

It is obvious that we will have to perform a great deal of further research before we understand even the basic operating principles of this technology. Nonetheless we have made advances.

JANEWAY

Show me.

SEVEN leads the others up to a monitor on the side wall. She presses a button and an OKUDAGRAM of the VOYAGER appears. The various phaser banks, torpedo tubes and shield generators are highlighted in sequence. Information flashes by at the side of the screen, probably details of proposed upgrades.

SEVEN (v/o)

From our analysis of the Destroyers' pulse weapon we have made several adaptations to the _Voyager_'s tactical systems. Mr. Kim?

Cut back to the people clustered around the monitor.

KIM

We determined that the Destroyers' pulse weapons generate powerful resonant effects like those in piezoelectric crystals. We have modified our shields to work on a continually rotating frequency and amplitude. We hope that this will improve their effectiveness against the pulse weapons.

JANEWAY

[Thoughtful] And the beam weapon?

TORRES

We still haven't worked out what that weapon does Captain. We have to assume that there is no defence against a hit from one of those weapons.

JANEWAY nods soberly.

SEVEN

We have also modified our phaser banks to add a chronoton particle stream to a rotating-frequency main nadion stream. It should improve our penetration of their shields. We cannot make any guarantees about full effectiveness, but it is a major improvement in the face of the observed weapons effects.

JANEWAY nods thoughtfully. She begins to play with her com-badge in a pre-occupied way. Finally she nods decisively.

JANEWAY

We aren't going to get anything more at this stage. Keep working on that Rifle, B'Elanna. I have a hunch that that little gun may be the clue that solves this problem.

JANEWAY turns away and heads out of the LAB.

JANEWAY

We've been on the defensive since the start of this war, people. [Slight smile] With these modifications, I think that we will be able to go hunting.

CONTINUITY

To be continued next time on Star Trek: Voyager!

FADE

3. Dark Destiny

> <meta name="Generator"> The Dark Times Cycle, Episode 3 - 'Dark Destiny'

The Dark Times Cycle, Episode 3 - 'Dark Destiny'

By Ben Russell-Gough

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Species 704 (The Destroyers) are my work.

Continuity note: This story occurs at the end of season 6/the beginning of season 7 and is an ALTERNATE UNIVERSE story. It is in place of UNIMATRIX ZERO, as I think the Borg are over-exposed!

This story is presented in the form of a screenplay by way of an experiment. Please tell me what you think!

The battle is joined, but sometimes the enemy isn't what you thinkâ€|

TEASER

CONTINUITY

Last time on Star Trek â€" Voyagerâ€|

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY is standing at the centre of the BRIDGE, addressing the crew.

JANEWAY

We are at war. This isn't a war any of us wanted or expected, but it is a war we must fight nonetheless. If the Destroyers are not beaten while their presence in our galaxy is still small, then we have virtually no hope of stopping them from overrunning every civilisation in the galaxy, [Quiet, but clear] including the Federation.

Brief cut of various OFFICERS reactions to JANEWAY's speech

JANEWAY

This is it, people: the time you keep on reading about in the history

texts. This is the moment that will define future history for millennia to come. Either we win this war [beat, gravely] or the future ends, here and now.

Cut to BRIDGE, later on. The crew is tense.

KIM

[Urgent] Captain! I am picking up an all-frequency distress call. Captain, it's the Adronai. They say they're under attack by ships that match known Destroyer designs.

JANEWAY

On screen.

VIEWSCREEN - F/X - POV in orbit around a large Jupiter-type planet. From the foreground, this is obviously a space station of some kind. A moon hovers in the middle distance.

Three Adronai STARSHIPS are firing relentlessly at something off screen. Suddenly a pencil-thin blue white beam hits the nearest STARSHIP, which simply blows apart in a massive blue-white explosion. Four small single-hulled darts with three fins equally spaced around the rear and three forward facing 'fangs' suddenly race into shot, and open fire with fast-firing blue-white pulses. These are Destroyer DART-class fighters.

ADRONAI (v/o)

Oh no! [Static] them back. All hands to the defence grid! Command we need relief. [Static] are attacking!

The second STARSHIP is hit several times. Its shields absorb the first burst, but the second tears into the hull, ripping an enormous chunk out of the hull in a bright yellow-white flash. Several more shots rip the STARSHIP into a shapeless piece of blazing debris that begins to drift away. The third STARSHIP is also swiftly smashed by another foursome of DARTs.

ADRONAI (v/o)

[Static] vessels, this is Adronai Deep Station Three. We surrender! We [Static] Please, we [static] want, just stop firing!

A TIAMAT dreadnought moves impressively into the shot, it turns towards the POV and fires its main weapon. There is a brief, extremely truncated scream and then the screen dissolves into static.

KIM

[Quiet] Signal lost, Captain

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

JANEWAY is sitting on her couch, watching a few medium-sized lumps of rock tumble past. Her face is expressionless, but the way she is clutching her coffee mug betrays her inner torment.

CHAKOTAY enters holding a PADD. He gives it to JANEWAY, who scans its contents apathetically.

CHAKOTAY

The system looks a total loss, Captain. Both class-M worlds and a class-L that the Adronai heavily colonised are gone. Every moon and even vaguely colonisable body has a fresh set of craters and there are many refined alloy masses floating about the system. None have any power emissions.

JANEWAY checks the padd, her face cold. She sighs and looks up at CHAKOTAY with a grim expression.

JANEWAY

The Destroyers have named the game, Chakotay: Total war.

CHAKOTAY

[Angry] This isn't war, Katherine, it's genocide.

F/X " VIEWSCREEN " The ADRONAI SPACE STATION drifts through an asteroid field.

INT. BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY is talking to a sceptical JANEWAY

CHAKOTAY

Captain, I would like to lead an Away Team across to the station and check for survivors. Our tricorders should be more effective at close range than our sensors can be from a distance.

INT. ADRONAI STATION, CORRIDOR

CHAKOTAY, TUVOK, KIM, PARIS, TORRES and SEVEN materialise.

F/X - VIEWSCREEN " A poor-quality image of the Destroyer ROACH reconnaissance 'droid in flight.

TUVOK (v/o)

The target appears to be some manner of remote reconnaissance device. It is almost perfectly sensor shielded. I can only read its silhouette against the background.

INT. BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY almost runs back to his station. The TURBOLIFT opens and PARIS runs to his station.

CHAKOTAY

I wonder how long it's been out there?

JANEWAY

One thing's for certain. The Destroyers know we're here. Mr. Tuvok, take it out.

F/X â€" POV looking forward from one side of the VOYAGER's port nacelle. The VOYAGER fires two bursts: one from the main upper starboard array, one from the lower port array. One shot hits the POD and one misses. The POD fires two electric blue pulses. Both hit the shields.

INT. BRIDGE

Everyone rocks and rolls from the impact.

F/X â€" The POD flies past us as the VOYAGER begins to fire alternately from its upper starboard and lower port arrays, then from its lower starboard, upper port and ventral arrays.

POV follows the POD past. Approximately half the VOYAGER's shots strike the POD. As the VOYAGER comes into shot from the right, three shots connect at once and the POD explodes.

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY sighs and relaxes.

JANEWAY

Nice shooting, Tuvok. Mr. Paris, get us back to the derelict, maximum speed.

CHAKOTAY's eyes widen as he sees something on the centre console.

CHAKOTAY

Captain, before we destroyed the probe it transmitted an extremely high-power data burst. We are picking a warp signature coming from the direction of the signal's target!

JANEWAY's eyes widen too.

INT. ADRONAI STATION, DAMAGED CORRIDOR

SOMETHING insectoid with four arms and four legs smashes through a wall, knocking two gold-shirted ENSIGNS to the floor. One ENSIGN is thrown across the corridor. The second has his Phaser Rifle knocked out of his hand and is stabbed with a long triangular blade. The first fires his phaser. The ALIEN draws a snub-nosed rifle from over its' shoulder and cuts down the ENSIGN with a single bright electric-blue energy pulse.

INT. ADRONAI STATION

Corridor 'T'-Junction with a door opposite the side corridor. The corridor curves off in the distance

KIM suddenly runs around the corner of the corridor, followed by two GUARDS

KIM

[Loud and panicked] Oh Shiiiiiiit!

Something BIG AND SCARY throws a dramatic stick-puppet shadow on the corridor wall behind KIM. All three fleeing Starfleet personnel turn around and fire their phasers at the indistinct insectoid shape. A quartet of electric-blue energy pulses come the other way and one blows the first GUARD off his feet.

TORRES joins CHAKOTAY and a GUARD aiming down the corridor. SEVEN pulls her phaser pistol and dives out into the corridor, rolling to a stop in mid-corridor, a Destroyer energy bolt shrieking overhead.

SEVEN

[Shouts] Aim for the neck!

CHAKOTAY

[Shouts back] Fire!

POV up the CORRIDOR. Two DESTROYERS are advancing down, moving smoothly on six limbs, hunkered down and using their lower arms as extra feet. They are sweeping the area in front of them with their energy weapons. Three golden pulses and a beam converge on the first DESTROYER. There is a shower of sparks and the alien goes down without a sound.

The second DESTROYER begins to back up. At the end of the corridor, its two comrades come out of cover and lay down suppressive fire. Everyone ducks into cover except SEVEN, who covers her head and tries to melt into the floor.

The second DESTROYER turns to run for cover.

Another converging quartet of phaser blasts blows the second DESTROYER's head clean off. The alien goes down. The remaining DESTROYERS dive into cover.

SEVEN looks to the end of the side corridor and gasps.

Her POV. The corridor is empty, then there is an oval area filled with a blue-green rippling effect like the rippling of a disturbed pond. The ripples take a tall insectoid shape and a Destroyer soldier stands before us.

TORRES moves instantly. She charges forward and delivers a sweeping blow to the face with the butt of her rifle. The rifle's butt shatters on impact and the DESTROYER sweeps her aside with a single blow. There is a moment of chaos. There is a musical metallic 'CLICK' and a long, cruelly serrated triangular blade appears in the creature's upper right hand. CHAKOTAY moves towards the alien soldier.

SEVEN is about to join her two colleagues when the second DESTROYER lopez down the corridor. She swivels efficiently and blasts the creature with her phaser. She scores a direct hit, but it does no good. KIM and the second GUARD have recovered. They jump on to this new threat. There is a moment's fierce struggle before KIM is swept

with stunning force against the doorframe. GUARD TWO raises his rifle. The DESTROYER sweeps its upper right arm down, knocking the phaser's muzzle downwards. It sweeps its lower right arm, gripping one of the triangular attack blades, upwards slicing the GUARD open from hip to shoulder.

The GUARD screams and goes down, blood fountaining out of the wound.

CHAKOTAY moves forward, a determined look darkening his face. He avoids several flailing arms, almost leaps at the first DESTROYER and hooks his left arm about its neck. The DESTROYER makes a hissing noise and rears back. It regains self-control and lowers its attack blade towards CHAKOTAY's exposed neck. Suddenly it pauses and makes a strangely querying musical whine.

Close up, CHAKOTAY's knife buried into the upper join of the DESTROYER's torso armour. With a vicious yank, CHAKOTAY drags the blade along the join. Sticky black ichor pours out. The DESTROYER makes a choking noise and then collapses with a drawn out shriek.

At the join of the corridor, KIM is riding on the remaining DESTROYER's back. It howls loudly and almost twists its torso backwards. It grabs KIM and flings him against the wall. SEVEN jumps forward, carrying a phaser rifle. She throws it at the DESTROYER, which catches it reflexively with its lower pair of arms.

The DESTROYER looks down at the rifle in patent confusion. POV, looking down at the rifle's power indicator, which is lit red and flashing.

RIFLE COMPUTER

Threeâ€¦ Twoâ€¦ Oneâ€¦

The rifle self-destructs with a bright white flash, throwing the DESTROYER down the corridor. After a moment it rises. Its lower arms are gone and there are several tears in its armour marked with leaking ichor. It draws its energy rifle, sways on its feet for a moment, then collapses with a final-sounding sigh.

INT. VOYAGER SCIENCE LAB

JANEWAY is standing with TORRES, SEVEN and KIM looking at a captured Destroyer Energy Rifle.

JANEWAY

Keep working on that Rifle, B'Elanna. I have a hunch that that little gun may be the clue that solves this problem.

JANEWAY turns away and heads out of the LAB.

JANEWAY

We've been on the defensive since the start of this war, people. [Slight smile] With these modifications, I think that we will be able to go hunting.

CONTINUITY

And now the continuation!

F/X " The VOYAGER moves through the Adronai Asteroid Field

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY is standing by KIM at the Ops station.

JANEWAY

I don't want to be too ambitious, Harry. Find us a smaller vessel, perhaps a scout or a corvette.

KIM

[Resigned, with a sigh] Yes, Captain.

CHAKOTAY

Do you really think it is a good idea to pick a fight with the Destroyers at this stage, Captain?

JANEWAY looks at CHAKOTAY. She does not look angry at this question, only rueful. If she has any doubts, she does not show it.

JANEWAY

We've got to face them eventually Commander. [Slight smile] Think of this as a field test of our weapons and shield modifications.

CHAKOTAY shakes his head slightly. He will not push this any further, but it is obvious that he doesn't like it.

PARIS

We're clearing the edge of the asteroid field, Captain.

JANEWAY

Keep us within the edge of the field Mr. Paris, slow to one quarter-impulse power.

KIM is checking his sensor board. He freezes for a moment before speaking.

KIM

Captain! We've detected a Destroyer starship, about the size of a scout, approaching the asteroid field at about half light-speed. They are slowing fast and entering the field.

JANEWAY

Red alert! All hands to Battle Stations.

LIGHTS and SOUNDS " Red alert

JANEWAY walks around to the command area and sits down in her chair, her eyes sparkling with determination.

JANEWAY

Mr. Kim, go to 'stealth' mode. Mr. Paris lay in a course that will bring us in behind them. [Quietly, to CHAKOTAY] Hopefully their impulse wake will shield us until the last moment.

JANEWAY stares out at the VIEWSCREEN for a moment before touching a control on the centre console.

JANEWAY

All hands, this is the Captain. We are about to engage the Destroyers.

FADE

[New opening to titles] SFX " The Voyager moving at sub light in deep space.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Space: The final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Voyager. Her ongoing mission, to find her way home. To cross a galaxy, carrying the dream of exploration beyond the farthest stars. To boldly go where no one has gone before!

Opening titles

ACT 1

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD.

With an unearthly screech, a Destroyer CHIMERA-class scout roars overhead. It is a single-hulled vessel with three of the characteristic long 'spines' spaced equally around its base. Three 'fangs' point forward from the prow and three shorter 'thorns' protrude from the hull towards the rear, at the same position around the circumference as the spines.

After the CHIMERA speeds past, the VOYAGER slides out from behind an asteroid. The starship accelerates towards the camera.

INT. BRIDGE

The ship is at Battle Stations. Security guards are posted at every Bridge entrance. PARIS, KIM, and TUVOK are at their normal stations. SEVEN is standing at the 'horseshoe' console directly behind JANEWAY and CHAKOTAY. Non-entity ENSIGNS are at all other posts.

JANEWAY

Is there any sign they have detected us yet?

KIM

None Captain. [Beat] From the sensor returns, the Destroyer scout

appears to be scanning the asteroid field for metallic ores. They could be the advance guard for a mining operation.

JANEWAY

[Slight smile] Well, I'm afraid this claim is taken. Mr. Tuvok, stand by all weapons. On my mark, fire four torpedoes, spread iota and lock on all phaser banks.

TUVOK

[Totally calm] Aye, Captain.

PARIS sits up straighter in his seat and flexes his hands across the manoeuvring controls.

PARIS

[Quietly] Here we go!

JANEWAY raises her hand.

JANEWAY

Mr. Tuvok, [drops hand] Fire!

F/X " Four torpedoes spit from the VOYAGER's forward tubes.

POV switches to looking forward from in front of the starboard nacelle. We see the torpedoes race forward, two to either side of the CHIMERA. The torpedoes detonate to either side. There is no obvious effect on the Destroyer vessel.

SEVEN

[Dry] No visible effect.

KIM

They're coming about

F/X " VIEWSCREEN " The CHIMERA flips up and over and heads right at the VOYAGER.

CHAKOTAY

I think we got their attention.

JANEWAY

As expected, Commander. Helm: hard a port. Weapons: fire phasers as they bear.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

POV " Looking forward from the VOYAGER towards the CHIMERA. The VOYAGER swerves to the left as the CHIMERA races towards them. Golden phaser blasts strike out from the starboard main and ventral phaser banks. The blasts visibly flare against the shields of the Destroyer vessel. They glow a glassy blue shade at the impact points.

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY

Analysis, Seven?

SEVEN touches a few controls.

SEVEN

The Destroyer vessel's shields are still causing a diffusing effect on our phasers. However, the chroniton pulse effect and cycling base frequencies are having some effect. We have successfully compromised the enemy's shield integrity.

JANEWAY smiles at this news.

CHAKOTAY

Unfortunately, they are now ready for our little surprise.

JANEWAY

[Annoyed] Then we will have to manufacture our own, Commander. Mr. Paris, attack pattern Beta One, full impulse power.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

POV " Looking aft from the VOYAGER towards the CHIMERA. The Voyager suddenly lifts up its nose and turns to the left. Suddenly it rolls onto its back and dips sharply down, coming to face the Destroyer scout once more.

Phaser blasts from the upper port, lower port, lower starboard and ventral arrays smash into the CHIMERA's shields. This time the Destroyer scout rolls noticeably away from the impacts, its shields more than half-illuminated. As the two ships pass each other, we get a comparison in size. The CHIMERA is about twice the length and of similar span to the MAQUIS HEAVY FIGHTER

In response, two electric-blue energy bolts zip from the mid-hull 'thorns' and strike the VOYAGER's shields.

INT. BRIDGE

The shuddering impact throws everyone to the right. Sparks shower from the edges of the Engineering and Master Situation displays.

CHAKOTAY

Damage report!

TUVOK

Shields down 33%!

SEVEN

The rotating shield nutation is effective, but the resonance effect of their weapons is still causing damage.

TORRES (v/o)

That's an understatement, Seven, the feed back on the Shield Generators is in the red already!

KIM

They're targeting us again!

JANEWAY

Evade, Mr. Paris!

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

POV " Looking aft from the Voyager towards the CHIMERA. The Destroyer ships fires a series of pulse blasts from its forward 'fangs' and the mid-hull 'thorns.' The VOYAGER swerves to the right and tips up, accelerating noticeably. The first series of shots misses.

Our POV switches to looking at the VOYAGER from the direction of the CHIMERA as the ship rolls onto its port side and pulls up into a sharp curve along the length of an asteroid. Several trios of electric-blue enemy energy bolts shoot past, ripping into the surface of the asteroid. The rock seems to ripple away from the impacts and the giant rock begins to break up.

The Voyager ducks into the disintegrating asteroid, using the flying rocks as cover. Several rocks visibly bounce off the Navigational Deflector Field.

INT. BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY is checking the centre console. EVERYONE is intent on his or her console. JANEWAY visibly winces at the sight on the VIEWSCREEN.

POV " looking forward to the VIEWSCREEN.

F/X " VIEWSCREEN - Rocks zip by the ship's prow as PARIS steers the ship through the disintegrating asteroid.

JANEWAY

[Approving] Nice moves, Tom.

PARIS

[Smug] Shucks, Ma'am, we aims to please.

F/X " VIEWSCREEN - A blue energy bolt shoots past, vaporising a fair-sized rock.

CHAKOTAY

[Grim] They're trying to flush us out.

JANEWAY

[Firm] I've never disappointed an audience. Mr. Paris, pitch up 90 degrees and increase to ramming speed.

PARIS shoots JANEWAY a disbelieving look. Another rock hits the Navigational Deflector Field, making everyone jump from the transmitted impact force.

PARIS

"Ramming speed?" [Resigned] Okay, Ma'am, you're the Captain.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD. Dense rock cloud formed from a disintegrating asteroid.

The VOYAGER tilts her nose up and accelerates. As the ship clears the worst of the debris, our POV tilts upward to show the CHIMERA hovering outside the cloud. The VOYAGER's two main upper phaser banks fire, hitting the CHIMERA and causing the scout to jerk back.

The VOYAGER's main lower phasers fire, but the CHIMERA ducks forward and down, dodging the shots. The Destroyer scout's forward arrays fire twice, the blasts connect with the VOYAGER's shield. The Federation ship is knocked back into a fair-sized rock.

INT. BRIDGE

There is chaos. The entire crew are blown backwards by the impact. Several consoles spit sparks and fire and two cable trunks collapse, spilling sparking cables everywhere. The main monitor on the Helm console explodes and begins to burn.

INT. ENGINEERING

TORRES looks up in horror. A massive tongue of flame roars up from behind the Warp Core. Several CREWMEN are blown away from their exploding consoles.

TORRES

Gods! Medical alert in Main Engineering. [Turns to VORIK] Get extinguishers on those fires, stat!

CAREY (out of shot)

Lieutenant, the power transfer coils are overloading! They're going to blow!

TORRES

I'm on my way, Joe!

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY picks herself up as CHAKOTAY helps PARIS put out the fire on his console. KIM has a big bruise starting on his left cheek. SEVEN is working her console frantically.

JANEWAY

I want a damage report!

KIM

Shields are down 80%. Secondary damage reported in Main Engineering, Deflector Control and Forward Torpedo Room.

TUVOK

Forward torpedo launchers are off-line.

PARIS

I still have helm control, but the navigational deflectors are shot. That's going to limit our manoeuvrability in this rock storm.

JANEWAY looks grimly around her crew before turning to SEVEN

JANEWAY

What is the status of our modifications, Seven?

SEVEN

While our shield modifications are offering increased protection, they are not entirely effective. Captain, they will not be able to withstand another attack. Our phaser modifications are clearly only effective at close range.

JANEWAY looks out at the VIEWSCREEN. She shifts her jaw nervously and begins to pace with tension.

F/X " VIEWSCREEN " The Asteroid Field swerves up down, left and right as PARIS continues to evade randomly. A trio of electric-blue energy pulses occasionally shoot past.

JANEWAY

[Thoughtful] Mr. Kim, what is the status of the enemy vessel?

KIM

It's difficult to be sure, Captain. All Destroyer technology seems to create a low-level jamming field that makes accurate scanning impossible. [Beat, checks console] I'd say that their shields are at about one third power.

JANEWAY

Janeway to Aft Torpedo Room. Re-set the navigational deflectors on your torpedoes to a rotating modulation and prepare to fire. [Walks over to PARIS] Tom, slow down and let them get close. I want them to think we are more badly hurt than we actually are.

PARIS

Right. Slowing to one half impulse.

JANEWAY

Steady as she goes.

TORRES (v/o)

Engineering to Bridge.

JANEWAY

Go ahead, Lieutenant.

INT. ENGINEERING, Upper Level

TORRES and CAREY are at an open Jeffries Tube junction. They are struggling with some heavy-duty cabling.

TORRES

Captain, the power transfer system has taken a lot of damage. It must be some kind of effect of the Destroyers weapons. Another hit, even if the shields take it, could blow out the entire main power system and leave us helpless.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Can you re-route power through undamaged nodes B'Elanna?

TORRES shakes her head

TORRES

That isn't the problem, Captain. The weapons strikes directly affect our power system through some kind of crazy resonant effect. The energy released by each hit seems to filter through the generators into the power system.

JANEWAY (v/o)

[Appalled] That's impossible!

TORRES

[Shrugs, fatalistic] I only report them, Ma'am. We can't take one single further hit from their weapons.

JANEWAY (v/o)

No promises, B'Elanna. Stay on top of it.

TORRES sighs and seems to sink into herself slightly.

TORRES

[Quiet] Aye, Captain.

TORRES turns to CAREY and the two go to work.

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY puzzles over something on the centre console while the rest of the crew work their stations frantically. KIM's console begins to bleep loudly.

KIM

The Destroyer scout is trying to get a torpedo lock!

SEVEN

Our shields and primary systems are too heavily damaged for us to attempt my previous countermeasure, Captain.

JANEWAY looks up with fear in her eyes. She clenches her jaw and nods decisively.

JANEWAY

[Snaps] Full jamming protocols, Mr. Kim. Mr. Paris, hold your course but prepare for fast evasive action.

PARIS

Yes Ma'am.

SEVEN

Torpedo incoming, bearing 174 mark 08!

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

POV, looking back from the VOYAGER to the CHIMERA. The CHIMERA fires a single Singularity Torpedo. The blue-white projectile shoots forward towards the sluggishly manoeuvring VOYAGER.

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY stiffens. This is obviously it.

JANEWAY

Wait for it, Mr. Paris. Wait! wait!

F/X " VIEWSCREEN " View aft

The background is slowly shifting to the right, indicating a slow turn to starboard. The Singularity Torpedo is closing in very fast.

KIM

Impact in ten seconds, Captain. Five seconds, four!

JANEWAY

Now!

PARIS touches a single control.

PARIS

Going to full impulse! Hard-a-port and full negative pitch!

EVERYONE lurches back and to the right as the I.D.F. struggles to keep up with the sudden violent manoeuvre.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The VOYAGER dips down and swerves hard to the left. The TORPEDO overshoots and curves around back towards the ship.

INT. BRIDGE

TUVOK checks his console and frowns slightly.

TUVOK

The torpedo is still homing, Captain.

KIM

Damn! Our jamming is totally ineffective, Captain.

SEVEN

This is consistent with previous engagements. Destroyer missiles seem to have an active anti-jamming system.

JANEWAY is checking her console.

JANEWAY

Tom! Take us behind that rock at 012 mark 45, and then change course to take us radially away from the torpedo!

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The VOYAGER cuts in front of a rock about the size of the bridge area and turns away. The TORPEDO runs right in and hits the rock, which implodes with a brief blue flash, creating a brief visual 'gravitational lens' distortion.

INT. BRIDGE

The shock wave throws everyone about. Several consoles spit sparks. SEVEN is first to get back to her instruments.

SEVEN

[Alarmed] Captain! The Destroyers are preparing to fire their primary weapon!

PARIS

[Irony] It never rainsâ€|

TUVOK

Captain, I remind you that, even fully functional, our modified shields cannot withstand a hit from that weapon.

JANEWAY

Maintain full evasive manoeuvres, Mr. Paris.

SEVEN

Captain; remember that the Destroyers scored a hit with such a weapon when we passed one of their ships at warp speed. We must either disengage or find some cover!

JANEWAY

[Angry] We are not going to run, Seven!

CHAKOTAY is leaning over the shoulder of the ENSIGN at the Science console. His eyes light up with inspiration.

CHAKOTAY

Captain, I have an idea!

JANEWAY

Let's have it, Chakotay.

CHAKOTAY

[Frustrated] There's no time, Captain. I can tell or I can do.

JANEWAY gives CHAKOTAY her 'Death Stare.' After fuming for a moment, she relents.

JANEWAY

[Reluctant] Go ahead, Commander.

CHAKOTAY

Tom, go to attack pattern alpha four. Mr. Tuvok; fire phasers in pattern two-nine.

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD

POV â€" Looking towards the VOYAGER from the CHIMERA. The VOYAGER suddenly pitches up, curves up overhead and dives right in front of the Destroyer scout. As the Federation ship races past, it fires a continuous series of shots from the Upper Main phaser banks.

POV tips down to follow the VOYAGER. After it passes the CHIMERA, it seems to continue its circle, but half-rolls and reverses the direction of its curve. It is now curving up and behind the CHIMERA. The CHIMERA fires its pulse weapons, but the shots pass through where

the VOYAGER would have been if it had not performed the second half of the manoeuvre.

New POV - Looking up and back from the VOYAGER to the CHIMERA. The Upper Main and Upper Rear phaser banks fire, causing the CHIMERA to pitch down from the impacts.

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY raises an eyebrow. She tries to remain cold, but cannot hide a little smile.

JANEWAY

Very impressive, Chakotay.

CHAKOTAY

[Wry] I have lots of previous experience in fighting against far more powerful ships, Captain.

JANEWAY nods with a sad and far-off expression.

KIM

They have a lock-on for their primary weapon.

CHAKOTAY

Take us back towards that big asteroid at 023 mark 347, Tom. Maintain two-thirds impulse power.

F/X â€" VIEWSCREEN - A big asteroid grows larger ahead.

INT. BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY

Take us up along the circumference of the asteroid, Tom. Slow us down to dead slow. When we are over the limb of the asteroid from the Destroyers' point of view, hold us there. On my mark, go to full power and get us behind the asteroid and radially away from the Destroyer ship at full power.

JANEWAY

Viewscreen aft.

F/X â€" VIEWSCREEN â€" The CHIMERA is moving towards the VOYAGER, coming closer and closer by the second. A blue nimbus of energy begins to form around the forward pointing 'fangs.'

KIM

They're getting ready to fire!

CHAKOTAY

Now, Tom!

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD, NEAR BIG ASTEROID

POV " Behind the ASTEROID, looking towards the VOYAGER. Further in the background, the CHIMERA comes over the limb of the ASTEROID, its' forward 'fangs' glowing blue-white. The VOYAGER suddenly accelerates and ducks behind the ASTEROID and races away. The CHIMERA fires its main weapon. The electric blue-white beam tries to track the VOYAGER, but slices into the asteroid instead.

An explosion blossoms out from the impact point. A green-grey shock wave races out across the surface of the asteroid, which then explodes with an enormous yellow fireball. A spherical blue-white shock wave shoots out from the explosion, carrying a hailstorm of rocks along with it.

INT. BRIDGE

KIM

Shock wave!

JANEWAY

All stations, brace for impact!

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The shock wave hits the VOYAGER and the starship tumbles forward and away from the impact.

INT. BRIDGE

The shock wave throws EVERYONE forward. CHAKOTAY manages to keep his seat, but the impact dumps JANEWAY to the floor. SEVEN flies right over the horseshoe and lands with a thump at the base of the centre console. All the lights dim and there are several spark fountains from fracturing power lines.

INT. ENGINEERING

A section of the UPPER LEVEL collapses, throwing several ENGINEERS to the lower level. Fireballs belch out from several Jeffries Tube accesses and from behind the Warp Core. Sparks and St. Elmo's Fire race across the surface of the Warp Core. The Warp Core dims and suddenly goes out.

INT. BRIDGE

EVERYONE is picking themselves up off the floor. The lights are dim and several displays are flickering. JANEWAY bats aside a collapsed cable trunk that has spilled several dozen fibre-optic cables down in front of her chair.

JANEWAY

[Shouts] Damage report!

KIM

Main power off-line!

TUVOK

Shields down, targeting sensors disabled.

PARIS

I've lost impulse power!

SEVEN gets up and vaults over the horseshoe to get back to her station.

KIM

I can't get secondary power on-line.

JANEWAY

Engineering, we'll be sitting ducks if we can't get secondary power up! What's happening down there?

TORRES (v/o)

That shock wave had the same effect as the Destroyers' pulse weapons, Captain. The entire main power network is out!

JANEWAY

Can you re-route secondary power?

TORRES (v/o)

I'm on it, Captain, but it's going slow. I've got a lot of casualties down here and that will slow things down even more.

JANEWAY

Do your best, B'Elanna. Concentrate on weapons and manoeuvring.

TORRES (v/o)

Yes, Ma'am.

JANEWAY sits back down and looks around for inspiration. CHAKOTAY is checking the centre console with a grim expression. SEVEN is manipulating her controls.

SEVEN

I will attempt to assist Lieutenant Torres by modifying our power system settings from my console.

KIM is working at his console. On the wall behind him, we can see an OKUDAGRAM of a system diagram. It shows a single white block to the right, connected to several rows of blocks by thin lines, some of which are white but most are red. Most of the blocks are coloured red. As KIM works, the blocks shift between rows and new white lines appear. As soon as a block is connected to the one of the right by a series of white blocks and lines, the block in question goes

white

KIM

Sensors back on-line Captain.

JANEWAY

Position of the enemy ship?

TUVOK

The Destroyer scout is at 181 mark 350 and is closing at half impulse.

CHAKOTAY

On screen.

F/X " VIEWSCREEN " Rubble continues to tumble through the ASTEROID FIELD. The CHIMERA comes off of the right of the VIEWSCREEN and turns towards our POV. A blue-white nimbus of light begins to form around its' forward facing 'fangs.'

INT. BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY

[Grim] Looks like they're going to try to finish us off!

SEVEN

Captain, the shields of the Destroyer vessel are very weak. They seem to have been as affected by the shock wave as we.

JANEWAY is struck by a sudden inspiration.

JANEWAY

Aft torpedo room, are those torpedoes modified yet?

TECHNICIAN (v/o)

Yes, Captain. Six standard Mk 6 torpedoes with rotating nav deflector frequencies, as ordered.

JANEWAY

Bridge to Engineering. B'Elanna, I need a miracle.

TORRES (v/o)

Captain, we have managed to charge up both the thrusters and all the weapons systems, but it will take time for us to get them on-line to secondary power. Anything you do will have to be a one-shot wonder.

JANEWAY

[Kind] That will have to be enough. Thank you, B'Elanna.

JANEWAY stands up and walks over to a corner of the Bridge to gather her thoughts.

JANEWAY

Alright, people. This is it. We don't have any margin for error left. I want everyone ready at their station and I want everything done right first time.

JANEWAY walks to the Tactical station.

JANEWAY

Mr. Tuvok, prepare to fire torpedoes. I want them to detonate as close to the enemy's shields as possible. Program them to detonate in such an order as they create a disruptive shock wave pattern across the shields. Engineering?

TORRES (v/o)

Yes, Captain?

JANEWAY

Feed a pulse compression wave into the phaser banks. Mr. Paris, after we fire our torpedoes, I want you to fire our landing thrusters at full power and yaw us around to face the Destroyer vessel.

PARIS

[Confused] Yes, Ma'am.

JANEWAY blows out her breath and sits in her chair again. She closes her eyes, as is in prayer, then stares at the oncoming CHIMERA on the VIEWSCREEN with a defiant glare. She raises her hand.

JANEWAY

Mr. Tuvok [Drops her hand] fire torpedoes.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

POV looking back from the VOYAGER to the CHIMERA.

Six torpedoes launch from the VOYAGER's rear tubes and race towards the CHIMERA, spreading out to come at it from every direction. They do not detonate simultaneously, but at irregular intervals spread over about half a second.

The CHIMERA shudders and staggers drunkenly to the right. It's left-hand 'spine' crumples and emits a yellow-white cloud of crackling drive plasma.

New POV, from the CHIMERA looking forward towards the VOYAGER.

The Starship leaps upwards, its landing thrusters glowing blue at full power. The ship begins to rotate to the right, turning its prow

to face the Chimera. The CHIEMRA fires back, but the shots shoot below the rapidly rising VOYAGER.

INT. BRIDGE

SEVEN

[Exultant] Enemy shields are down. We have compromised their hull integrity!

JANEWAY

[Raises fist] Mr. Tuvok, Fire phasers!

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

POV - Above the VOYAGER, looking down and towards the CHIMERA.

The Voyager's phaser banks start firing one after the other. Their blasts are unusually bright and have brighter pulses racing down their length.

As the blasts strike home, they carve burning slashes into the CHIMERA's side along the aft section, between the 'spines' and the triple 'boom' between the main hull and the prow.

F/X " VIEWSCREEN

The CHIMERA rolls and jerks away from the impacts, beginning to tumble. A massive yellow-white explosion boils out from between the spines. The explosions begin to spread forward. Finally the fires consume the entire ship and it disintegrates in a gigantic yellow-white fireball.

INT. BRIDGE

KIM

Target destroyed!

The ENTIRE CREW except TUVOK and JANEWAY cheer loudly. SEVEN turns from her console to hug a surprised KIM.

JANEWAY sags inward. CHAKOTAY touches her shoulder.

CHAKOTAY

You did it, Katherine.

JANEWAY manages a dim smile as she looks around the battered BRIDGE.

JANEWAY

Stand down from Battle Stations.

LIGHTS normal, if flickering or out in places. The CREW begins to sober and move to their stations, checking the damage to the VOYAGER.

TORRES (v/o)

[Grim] Captain, power levels are very low.

JANEWAY

I want a full damage report, tactical analysis and repair estimate on my desk by the end of the shift. Mr. Paris, stabilise our position and hold our station.

PARIS

Yes, Captain.

JANEWAY leans back in her chair. Her face is tight and her eyes are tightly closed. CHAKOTAY looks at her in concern.

FADE

ACT 2

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The VOYAGER is hovering amongst the rocks. There are several large superficial burns to the hull, and we can see figures in EVA suits patching up the worst damage to the surface.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's log: stardate 53928.1. The Voyager is currently holding station in the debris of the Adronai system. We are effecting repairs in the aftermath of our successful engagement against a Destroyer scout.

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

JANEWAY is reading a PADD with a distracted air. She keeps on shaking her head at whatever she is reading.

JANEWAY (v/o)

The entire crew is on a high after our victory, but I am not able to join in their euphoria. This was a scout, the smallest type of capital ship in use by the Destroyers. Yet, even with our modified tactical systems, we were only able to win through the most extreme of tactics and a fair portion of luck.

Nonetheless, we have defeated a Destroyer ship, a feat in its own right. We must now turn our attention to the greater conduct of the war. I am concerned as to how far the Destroyers have expanded their field of operations since their incursion into our galaxy.

[Sighs, continues in a hollow voice] I begin to wonder if we will live to see our homes again.

TUVOK enters the READY ROOM with another PADD. He stands stiffly to attention until JANEWAY looks up with a wan smile.

JANEWAY

Yes, old friend?

TUVOK offers JANEWAY his PADD.

TUVOK

Here is the Tactical Analysis you requested, Captain.

JANEWAY takes it and places it on top of a pile of PADDs on her table.

JANEWAY

I will give it my urgent attention, Mr. Tuvok. Along with the damage reports, the repair estimates and the casualty report. [Sighs] There were no fatalities this time, thank God.

TUVOK

[Dryly with a brow raised] I would attribute the low casualty figures to appropriate tactics rather than divine intervention.

JANEWAY laughs.

JANEWAY

Are you sure that Vulcans don't have a sense of humour?

TUVOK raises his brow again and adopts a pose of infinite martyrdom.

TUVOK

[Sighs] Quite sure, Captain.

JANEWAY gestures to the seat opposite her desk. TUVOK sits down, slightly stiffly.

JANEWAY

Our tactics may have been good Tuvok, but they weren't good enough. We won this one by luck alone.

TUVOK cocks his head thoughtfully. After a long moment of considering his Captain, he replies.

TUVOK

Logic dictates that there is, of course, a degree of chance that determines the outcome of any complex activity. However, considering the extreme advantage in terms of technology and firepower that the Destroyers enjoyâ€¦

JANEWAY

Even winning is an achievement, I know. Stillâ€¦ [Sighs] How am I going to win a war when I can barely win a battle?

TUVOK steeples his hands for a moment before replying.

TUVOK

One human bard once noted that 'no man is an island.' This truth does apply to our situation.

JANEWAY stands up and begins to pace as TUVOK continues.

TUVOK

This area of space has several warp-capable civilisations. While none of these civilisations approach the Federation in terms of technological sophistication, they could easily adapt our tactical modifications to their own technologies. It would increase their chances of survival by several orders of magnitude and possibly even give us sufficiently powerful allies to achieve our primary objectives.

JANEWAY

[Frustrated] So, what are you suggesting, Tuvok? Break the Prime Directive? Supply younger races with weapons they would not normally possess for centuries and use them as cannon fodder?

TUVOK

[Calm] Captain, the Prime Directive exists to protect less advanced civilisations from undue interference in their natural evolution. Under normal circumstances, the course of action you describe, indeed, would be completely unacceptable. However, consider this fact: The Destroyers have already interfered in their natural evolution and changed their likely course of development forever. The Destroyers offer only two possible destinies: One, near- or total-extinction when the Destroyers obliterate their every habitable world and space facility. Two, permanent enslavement by the Destroyers after the devastation of their entire civilisation.

TUVOK stares levelly at JANEWAY, who is looking back at him, her face filled with despair and exhaustion.

TUVOK

Captain, the simple presence of the Destroyers has disrupted the local civilisations' natural evolutionary path forever. At least we will be able to give them a fighting chance.

JANEWAY sags back into her chair. She rests her head in her hands, then looks up with a tired smile.

JANEWAY

I knew that this was the only path to take, Tuvok, but it helps to hear you say it. It feelsâ€¦ unnatural somehow to do this. But what choice do we have?

TUVOK

There are no other logical choices that allow us to prevent the Destroyers from becoming the dominant species in our galaxy.

JANEWAY

[Slight chuckle] It was a rhetorical question, Tuvok.

TUVOK

[Annoyed] As you say, Captain.

JANEWAY shakes her head, wearing a wry smile.

JANEWAY

I am due to meet with Seven of Nine in Astrometrics in half an hour. Tuvok, I would like you to meet with Commander Chakotay and figure out exactly how we should go about contacting the locals to get their assistance.

TUVOK nods and stands.

TUVOK

Captain?

JANEWAY

Yes, old friend?

TUVOK

Do not doubt yourself so intensely. Although it is logical to question past actions to improve future responses, continual self-criticism is damaging and will not provide any long-term benefits.

JANEWAY blinks in surprise

JANEWAY

Dismissed, Mr. Tuvok.

TUVOK exits. JANEWAY looks around the room, rubs the bridge of her nose and goes back to her reports.

INT. JEFFRIES TUBE

TORRES and PARIS are both at an opened maintenance panel. TORRES is scanning the burnt and torn components while PARIS sorts through a plastic hamper of spare parts.

TORRES

Alright, Tom. It looks like we need seven ODN type nine cables and a replacement EPS transformer and distributor. We'll also have to replace this control module.

PARIS

[Checks the box] The cables and the EPS components I've got, but we'll have to replicate the control module.

TORRES

[Sighs, rubs her eyes] Damage control.

PARIS

Hmm?

TORRES

Damage control, Flyboy. [Sighs and looks at the damaged equipment] That's all we seem to do these days. The Captain breaks it, and we fix it.

PARIS grins slightly at that

PARIS

Oh, come on, B'Elanna, that's not fair. It's not as if the Captain hangs a 'Hi, come and shoot at us' sign on the hull in Destroyer-ese!

TORRES smiles at the image. Then her face darkens again.

TORRES

She might as well, Tom. Those creatures have us really outgunned here, but she runs us right into a battle.

TORRES flips over in the tube to face PARIS who is leaning on an elbow, smiling slightly.

TORRES

You were up on the Bridge. Do you think she had any kind of plan before she started taking shots at Destroyer ships?

PARIS

You know the phrase, B'Elanna: "No battle plan survives contact with the enemy." Sure she had a plan, it's just that the Destroyers weren't playing to her tune, that's all.

TORRES taps PARIS on the chest with her tool to emphasise her words.

TORRES

Well, she needs to start doing better here, Tom. Eventually, those things are going to do serious damage and I won't be able to get us going again.

PARIS frowns in concern.

PARIS

This isn't my fearless B'Elanna. What's wrong honey? Why are you so wired up?

TORRES

[Angry] I'm 'wired up' because I've spend the last five days either picking up the pieces of a Destroyer attack or sifting through the artefacts of a civilisation that the Destroyers have eradicated. Right now, I have over half of my people in sickbay. This DOES NOT put me in the best of moods! Now, we are having to put this ship together using stockpiled spare parts and this is from taking on a light scout ship!

PARIS grabs TORRES by the arms

PARIS

B'Elanna, we've been through fights before. You know this is a tough crew. We'll make it.

TORRES bites her lip and shakes her head.

TORRES

You weren't on that station, Tom. Thoseâ€¦ Those monsters are brutal and relentless. I've been dreaming about that fight ever since.

TORRES draws in a shuddering breath.

TORRES

I'm a Klingon, Tom. My mother brought me up since I was a baby to believe in the concept of an 'honourable death.' To die gloriously in battle and go to the place of heroes, Sto-Vo-Kor. But what I saw on that stationâ€¦ It wasn't honourable and it wasn't glorious, Tom. It was just death. As much as I am ashamed to admit it, I'm afraid.

TORRES grabs PARIS back and holds on to him tightly. Tears run down her cheeks.

TORRES

I'm afraid, Tom. I'm afraid of the Destroyers and I am afraid of dying a coward.

PARIS strokes TORRES' hair awkwardly.

PARIS

Being afraid isn't anything to be ashamed of, B'Elanna. Look, I was on the Bridge during both battles so far. Those creatures have so much raw power that you go into a sweat when they first appear. I'm afraid, too, but isn't that the difference between honour and dishonour. Anyone can fight an easy enemy. The real warriors are those who fight in the face of the impossible.

TORRES looks up at PARIS in surprise. She manages a shaky smile.

TORRES

You always come up with the strangest comments, Tom. I never know what to expect of you.

PARIS

This is what you get for going out with the son of a Starfleet Admiral. Dad always filled my head with philosophy, [bitter smile] 'to make me a good Captain.'

PARIS shakes his head.

PARIS

Look B'Elanna, don't forget that we beat that Scout. We start small and work our way up. Even fear is useful. It will stop us taking stupid risks. [Cocky smile] Hey, isn't this the sort of struggle you Klingons are always writing those operas about?

TORRES looks at PARIS, her mouth and eyes round at his nerve. She punches him gently on the shoulder.

TORRES

You're a pig, Paris. [Suddenly hugs him tight] You're also my strength, Tom. Don't ever get yourself killed, do you understand?

PARIS

[Kind smile] Always and forever, beautiful.

TORRES and PARIS kiss, causing the temperature and humidity in the JEFFRIES TUBE to rise quickly. After a moment of clinging to each other, the two reluctantly return to their repairs.

TORRES

Pick it up, Flyboy. We've still got an entire other level to survey.

PARIS

At least after this one, we'll have our navigational deflectors back. That makes me happier.

TORRES

[Wry] It would!

INT. SICKBAY

There are several crewmen, including Joe CAREY, on various BIOBEDs. The DOCTOR is scanning one with his medical tricorder. There is no sense of urgency about this scene. There is obviously no one in immediate danger. NAOMI is visiting CAREY with Samantha WILDMAN. NAOMI is trying to be brave, but she is obviously very upset.

NAOMI

I was worried about you, Uncle Joe.

CAREY

[Smiles] Don't worry, Naomi. You know I'm too tough to break easily.

NAOMI manages a half-hearted smile. CAREY frowns and gestures her over.

CAREY

[Serious] Look here, kiddo. [Points to various abrasions and dressings] See? A few bumps and bruises. The Doctor will have me up and around soon enough. [Touches NAOMI's cheek] You don't have to worry anymore.

NAOMI

[Serious] You're okay now, but what about if the monsters come back?

WILDMAN

[Draws in breath] Then we'll chase them away again, just like before.

CAREY

We beat them before, and we'll beat them again. We'll have to fight, but you know that the Captain can beat them.

NAOMI nods solemnly, just as Captain JANEWAY enters.

NAOMI

[Turns to JANEWAY] Is it true that we'll beat the monsters Captain?

WILDMAN

[Scandalised] Naomi!

JANEWAY

[Puzzled] Monsters? What monsters?

CAREY

[Grim] That's Naomi's pet name for the Destroyers.

JANEWAY

[Frowns] How apt.

JANEWAY kneels and beckons the little girl over.

JANEWAY

Naomi, I know that you must be very scared by all this, but I want

you to understand this. These monsters are very bad, and they will hurt a lot of people if we don't stop them. [Deep breath] This means that we will have to fight them, and it may be a little dangerous at times. Do you trust the rest of the crew and me?

NAOMI nods mutely.

JANEWAY

Well, then you know that we will win, too. [Firm] They are very scary monsters, Naomi, but we will chase them away forever. I promise. And I promise that you will be safe from them.

NAOMI smiles a little and, much to JANEWAY's surprise, hugs her.

WILDMAN

[Wry smile] Okay, Scamp. You've seen your Uncle Joe. Now, Neelix asked you to help him clean up the mess hall, didn't he?

NAOMI gasps and looks penitent.

NAOMI

[Horrified] Oh no! I forgot!

WILDMAN

Off you go then!

WILDMAN and JANEWAY look on with a broad smile as NAOMI flees through the door.

WILDMAN

Thanks, Captain.

JANEWAY

[Shrugs tiredly] Hey, if I'm scared, then she has even more right to be. [Shakes her head and turn to CAREY] Wait a minute, 'Uncle Joe?'

CAREY and WILDMAN go an interesting shade of red, making JANEWAY smile.

CAREY

[Embarrassed] I'd prefer not to discuss it, Captain.

JANEWAY

[Grins] And I never guessed. You two get the Starfleet 'Stealth' award this year!

JANEWAY spares the two more embarrassment by walking over to the DOCTOR. She yawns once and rubs her neck irritably. She seems to be fighting a headache.

JANEWAY

How are your patients doing, Doctor?

The DOCTOR puts away a PADD he was using and faces JANEWAY.

DOCTOR

None are in any danger, Captain. Injuries were mostly restricted to minor burns and broken bones this time. [Frowns] Captain, when was the last time you slept?

JANEWAY waves dismissively.

JANEWAY

When I last had the time to sleep of course, Doctor.

DOCTOR

Captain, if you don't sleep, then you will be of little use to the crew.

JANEWAY

Doctor, your concern is noted, but I can't sleep at the moment.

DOCTOR

Captain, as the Chief Medical Officer, I must insist on this. I will provide you with a somatic if you need oneâ€|

JANEWAY

[Firm] Doctor, is your hearing faulty? I said that I CANNOT sleep.

JANEWAY storms out. The DOCTOR looks on with worry for a long moment. He reaches towards his COMBADGE once, pauses, then finally taps it.

DOCTOR

The Doctor to Commander Chakotay. Commander, I would like to see you in my office. [Sighs] I think we have a problem.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

I'll be there in five minutes, Doctor. Does the Captain know?

DOCTOR

[Grim] No she doesn't, Commander. I am very much afraid that that is the problem.

FADE

ACT 3

F/X " The VOYAGER hovers in the ASTEROID FIELD

INT. CARGO BAY 2

JANEWAY enters the CARGO BAY and looks around her. Several cargo drums were overturned in the battle and a group of CREWMEN is tidying up the resulting mess. JANEWAY speaks to one of the CREWMEN.

JANEWAY

Crewman, have you seen Seven of Nine?

CREWMAN

Yes, Captain. She came in at the beginning of the shift for some of her personal stuff and then left.

JANEWAY

[Thoughtful] That's strange. I thought she would be either regenerating or checking the sensor data from the engagement. [Looks up] Janeway to Seven of Nine.

COMPUTER (v/o)

Seven of Nine is logged as off-duty. There is a 'do not disturb' code entered onto her communications account. Do you wish to leave a message?

JANEWAY

[Impatient] No, I do not. Computer, locate Seven of Nine.

COMPUTER (v/o)

Seven of Nine is in Lieutenant Harry Kim's quarters.

JANEWAY's brows go up in surprise. She obviously has no clue what is going on.

JANEWAY

Strange time to go visiting.

JANEWAY sweeps out of the CARGO BAY, leaving a several bemused CREWMEN in her wake.

INT. VOYAGER CORRIDOR

JANEWAY walks down the corridor, past several CREWMEN. Several are carrying tool kits, loops of cable or other repair items.

INT. VOYAGER CORRIDOR, DOOR TO LIEUTENANT KIM'S QUARTERS

JANEWAY walks up to the door and presses the annunciator.

SOUNDS " Door chime.

When there is no immediate action, JANEWAY presses the annunciator again.

The doors open and KIM stands there in a dressing gown. He looks very scruffy and out-of-sorts. He has obviously just woken up.

KIM

Alright, who couldn't wait till 0600? [Suddenly realises who is at the door. Wakes up real quick.] Captain? I'm sorry, what can I do for you?

JANEWAY seems to be nonplussed for a moment as she takes in KIM's appearance. After a long pause she is able to blurt out her mission.

JANEWAY

I'm sorry to disturb your rest period, Harry. I'm looking for Seven.

KIM goes bright red.

KIM

Uh, hold on for a moment, Captain.

KIM leaves a surprised JANEWAY standing at the door. JANEWAY looks up and down the corridor nervously. She clearly does not want to see SEVEN so badly now.

An equally messed-up SEVEN comes to the door, wearing a knee-length dressing gown and, quite obviously, nothing else. (MAKEUP NOTE: SEVEN has a long Borg implant along the outside of her right leg. It looks like an insert into the structure of her lower leg.)

SEVEN

[Neutral] Yes, Captain?

JANEWAY stutters for a moment before recovering her composure.

JANEWAY

[Tentative] I, er, was hoping to talk to you about the overall strategic situation, Seven. [Looks around] I, er, I didn't know you had plans tonight.

SEVEN

[Puzzled] It is 0138 hours, Captain. Should I inform you of my off-duty plans?

JANEWAY

[Hasty] No! No, Seven, you don't. I was, er, just a little surprised to find you here. What you do in your own time is your own affair.
[Winces] No, don't take that wrongly. [Deep breath] Look Seven; I would still like to speak with you about the overall situation. How is 0900 in Astrometrics?

SEVEN

That is satisfactory. I will have to complete some data collation before I can report anyway.

JANEWAY

Right. That's good. Er, good night, Seven. Pleasant dreamsâ€|
erâ€|

JANEWAY bolts. KIM joins SEVEN at the doorway.

SEVEN

[Puzzled] I will never understand Human behaviour

KIM

It comes with practice.

SEVEN

As we are now awake, I think further practice is in order.

KIM's face brightens and the two leave the doorway. The door slides shut.

INT. VOYAGER CORRIDOR

JANEWAY is walking down the corridor very fast. Her face is still red with embarrassment.

INT. JANEWAY'S QUARTERS

The DOOR opens and JANEWAY nearly runs inside. There is a long pause as she leans against the wall. She is shaking. Suddenly, it is clear that she is laughing, tears rolling down her cheeks. After a mirth-filled moment, she manages to drag herself to the REPLICATOR, rubbing her neck and the bridge of her nose in fatigue.

JANEWAY

[Wry] I deserved that. [Yawns] Now I need to wake myself up.
Computer: Coffee, black.

F/X â€" Coffee replicated.

JANEWAY walks to her couch and sits down with a yawn. She picks up a PADD and begins to read. Her expression turns thoughtful as she sips her coffee.

SOUNDS â€" DOOR CHIME.

JANEWAY looks up with an annoyed expression.

JANEWAY

Who is it?

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

Chakotay.

JANEWAY

Commander! Please come in!

CHAKOTAY walks in and stands in the centre of the room with his usual relaxed smile.

CHAKOTAY

Burning the midnight oil, Katherine?

JANEWAY

You and me, it seems.

CHAKOTAY

[Shrugs] A C.O.'s work is never done.

JANEWAY puts down her PADD and regards CHAKOTAY for a moment. She gestures to the chair opposite her. Chakotay sits down.

JANEWAY

It's begun Chakotay.

CHAKOTAY

[Puzzled] Captain?

JANEWAY

It's the timing that puzzles me. We've become involved in a war against impossible odds, and now the crew decides to start pairing off.

CHAKOTAY laughs gently. JANEWAY gives him a tired 'Death Glare.'

CHAKOTAY

I don't think they have chosen now, Katherine. It's partly an instinctive response to such a struggle. You know, start replacing the losses.

JANEWAY nods in a melancholy way.

CHAKOTAY

Who do you have in mind?

JANEWAY

There's Tom and B'Elanna, Joe and Samantha and even Harry and Seven!

CHAKOTAY raises his brow in surprise.

CHAKOTAY

Well, it hardly started recently. Tom & B'Elanna have been an item for about two years now. Joe and Samantha have been in the same orbit since shortly after we received those letters from home. No doubt their letters contained bad news and they fell together for comfort. Harry has chased Seven around since we freed her from the Collective. I think she has finally realised what he wants. Megan Delaney has done the rounds of all the single men on the ship, and Jenny is chasing poor Vorik of all people! [Shrugs] The list goes on.

JANEWAY shakes her head at this glut of information. Her lips twitch with laughter.

JANEWAY

What is your secret, Commander? How do you know all the gossip?

CHAKOTAY

[Does the Dimple Grin] I eat my meals in the Mess Hall. You would be surprised what you pick up, especially from Tom Paris.

JANEWAY laughs out loud.

JANEWAY

Oh, this feels good, Chakotay. If I can forget for a second, I can think more clearly. Thank you.

CHAKOTAY looks worried.

CHAKOTAY

You really need to sleep, Katherine.

JANEWAY shakes her head.

JANEWAY

I can't afford the time, Commander. Too much needs to be done now.

CHAKOTAY

And when will you take the time, Captain? After you collapse on the Bridge in the middle of a battle because of fatigue? Or perhaps when you snap at an alien diplomat because you are tired?

JANEWAY

[Harsh] How comforting that I have your confidence.

CHAKOTAY

[Offended] I would follow you to the gates of Hades and beyond, Katherine, you know that. But as your First Officer I have a responsibility to you and the crew. We are at war, Captain, and you will be no good to us if you run yourself to exhaustion.

CHAKOTAY gets up and paces for a moment. He then goes to the REPLICATOR and taps in a code.

SOUNDS "Something is replicated.

CHAKOTAY turns around and he is holding a hypospray. He puts it on the table next to JANEWAY's PADDs.

JANEWAY

[Angry] How dare you?

CHAKOTAY

For you and this crew, I would dare much, Captain. [Pleading] Look, Katherine, you are exhausted. I know what it is like to be in this situation. You feel too keyed up to sleep. [Gestures to hypospray] I asked the Doctor to prepare this. It will put you out for four hours, Katherine.

JANEWAY is staring at the HYPOSPRAY as if it is a venomous snake. She opens her mouth to argue.

CHAKOTAY

Please, Katherine. The Destroyers won't blow up the galaxy in four hours. You must rest, or you will be useless in a crisis.

CHAKOTAY watches JANEWAY's face as conflicting emotions race across it. JANEWAY gestures helplessly at the pile of PADDs.

JANEWAY

[Quiet] There is a lot to be done Chakotay.

CHAKOTAY

Nothing that cannot wait. [Gently] The ship will still be here in the morning.

JANEWAY

[Low and exhausted] It would be good to sleep.

CHAKOTAY, in a daring manner, leans forward and kisses JANEWAY on the cheek.

CHAKOTAY

Thank you.

CHAKOTAY watches JANEWAY for a moment, then leaves the room.

JANEWAY stands and stretches. She looks at the coffee and the hypospray, lying side by side. It is obvious she is conflicted. Finally, with an attitude of decision, she picks up the coffee and puts it on the replicator tray.

JANEWAY

Recycle.

F/X " The coffee dematerialises.

JANEWAY picks up the hypospray and walks to her bed, still yawning and stretching. She pulls off her tunic and boots. She lies down for a moment with a sigh. She pulls off her shirt and tosses it idly across the room.

JANEWAY

[Firm] That's enough, Katherine.

She injects herself with the HYPOSPRAY. After a moment, her breathing slows down and she visibly relaxes. She is asleep.

INT. VOYAGER CORRIDOR

CHAKOTAY is standing near JANEWAY'S QUARTERS. The DOCTOR is leaning nervously against the wall, talking to him.

DOCTOR

[Nervous] Well, did she take it?

CHAKOTAY

Yes, Doctor. [Sigh] I feel like a total traitor.

DOCTOR

[Brisk] It was necessary, Commander. The Captain is suffering from chronic fatigue. If she didn't have a full night's sleep soon, she would either collapse or have a psychotic episode. Neither alternative particularly appeals to me.

CHAKOTAY manages a grim smile.

DOCTOR

Well, anyway, this medication will give her a normal day's sleep period. She will rest tonight, but after that? [He shrugs]

CHAKOTAY

After that, I think she will use both our hides for ornaments in her quarters.

DOCTOR

[Nervous] Do you think so?

FADE

ACT 4

INT. JANEWAY'S QUARTERS

JANEWAY rises and stretches. She rubs her neck and looks down at herself.

JANEWAY

[Disgusted] Did I sleep in my uniform?

She heads to the sonic shower. After a minute, We hear the SHOWER do a wash and dry cycle. JANEWAY returns, wearing a bathrobe. She is fixing her hair.

JANEWAY

I'm going to take back all those bad things I said about you, Chakotay. I feel a hundred percent better.

JANEWAY heads to her wardrobe and changes into her uniform (out of shot, you dirty people).

JANEWAY (Out of Shot)

[Happy and sunny tone] Computer! Time and agenda, please.

COMPUTER (v/o)

Good morning, Captain. It is 1045 hours. Today's schedule: Full Senior Staff meeting 0750 hours, cancelled. Meeting with Seven of Nine in Astrometrics at 0900 hours, cancelled. Meeting with Commander Tuvok to discuss tactical options postponed to 1300 hours. You have three messages. Two messages are from Commander Chakotay and one is from Seven of Nine. Shall I play your messages?

There is a long, dangerous pause. JANEWAY re-enters the shot, wearing her uniform, (sans tunic, which she is carrying under her arm). JANEWAY's face is a picture of shocked disbelief.

JANEWAY

[Horrified] 1045 hours? [Furious] Chakotay!

JANEWAY tears out of the room.

INT. BRIDGE

PARIS is at the helm, KIM is at ops and TUVOK is at Tactical. CHAKOTAY is sitting in his chair, reading a PADD. He initials the

report and hands it back to the CREWMAN standing next to him.

JANEWAY bursts in, still struggling to fasten her tunic.

CHAKOTAY

[Cheerful] Good morning, Captain!

JANEWAY

[Harsh] My Ready Room, Commander. Now.

JANEWAY storms into her READY ROOM. CHAKOTAY rises and walks to the door, wearing a mournful expression. After he enters the READY ROOM, there is a long silence around the BRIDGE.

PARIS

[Wry] Well, that's the last we'll see of him, I think.

INT. READY ROOM

JANEWAY is pacing furiously around her lounge area like a trapped animal. CHAKOTAY is standing by her desk, wearing a mild expression.

JANEWAY

[Boiling mad] You told me that hypo would give me four hours sleep, Commander. I wake up after doing over nine hours! You lied to me! Lied! To me! [CHAKOTAY opens his mouth] Shut up! I should bust you to the ranks! Or have you keelhauled! This is mutiny, Commander! I should have you court-martialled!

JANEWAY walks right up to CHAKOTAY and starts poking him in the chest.

JANEWAY

If you think that this little stunt has done you any good, you are sorely mistaken, mister. Command relationships are based on trust, Commander. You betrayed that last night. Understand that I will not make that error again! Are we clear on that?

There is a long pause. CHAKOTAY is silent, looking at JANEWAY with that mild, kind expression.

JANEWAY

[Furious] Well?

CHAKOTAY

[Mild] Can I say something now?

JANEWAY

[Almost screams] YES!

CHAKOTAY

Well, I suppose, firstly, lying to you last night was the most gut-wrenchingly unpleasant thing I have ever had to do. Secondly, I am glad to see that you are back to full health, Captain. I do hope you stopped off for breakfast before you came storming on to the Bridge.

JANEWAY does her landed fish impersonation. CHAKOTAY hands her a PADD.

CHAKOTAY

Here is Tuvok's Gamma Shift report. We are still holding position within the asteroid field. There is no indication that the Destroyers are either searching for us or have located us. Seven of Nine says that she can see you in Astrometrics whenever you are ready. She has put together a strategic overview of the current situation.

JANEWAY

[Quiet and dangerous] I am not a child, Chakotay. Don't presume to treat me like one.

CHAKOTAY

[Angry] Then don't act like one, Katherine. You are supposed to be a brilliant Starship Captain. [Sighs] Show your maturity and your achievement by not driving yourself into exhaustion every time we face a threat.

JANEWAY gasps in amazement.

JANEWAY

[Disbelief] So speaks a friend?

CHAKOTAY

Yes. I am worried about you, Katherine. We all are. You were this close to a breakdown yesterday.

CHAKOTAY holds his thumb and forefinger a centimetre apart

CHAKOTAY

[Angry] We are at war, Captain. We can't afford your self-indulgent obsessions now. We need you clear headed and focussed, and you won't be that if you try to do twenty-hour shifts.

JANEWAY looks on in amazement as CHAKOTAY begins to pace.

CHAKOTAY

If you want my resignation, Captain, well that's fine by me. Just don't come crying to the rest of us if you get tired and sloppy and

then loose the war.

JANEWAY is still trying to be angry, but fails. Frankly, CHAKOTAY is magnificently angry. She actually smiles.

CHAKOTAY

[Annoyed] You can find the time to smile?

JANEWAY

Why did I ever even bother to question your motives?

CHAKOTAY

You are a self-reliant person, Captain. Don't make the mistake of shutting your crew out.

JANEWAY shakes her head.

JANEWAY

All right, Commander. I forgive you this time. But if you everâ€¦|

CHAKOTAY

[Dimple smile] I got the message the first time, Captain.

JANEWAY

[Sigh] Dismissed. Get out. Whatever.

CHAKOTAY leaves the room, leaving JANEWAY with her thoughts and her PADDs.

INT. ASTROMETRICS

SEVEN is standing at her preferred console, watching something on the big MAIN DISPLAY. JANEWAY enters.

SEVEN

[Neutral] Good Morning, Captain.

JANEWAY

Hello Seven.

There is an awkward pause before JANWAY continues.

JANEWAY

Um, Seven, this is probably not my business, but I am a little concerned about the speed that your relationship with Lieutenant Kim isâ€¦|

SEVEN

You are correct, Captain.

JANEWAY pauses.

JANEWAY

[Surprised] I am? How?

SEVEN

[Slight smile] It is none of your business.

JANEWAY

[Laughs] All right, consider the subject dropped. [Gestures at the big MAIN DISPLAY] We are here to discuss the strategic situation.

SEVEN nods in agreement and touches a control on her console.

F/X - MAIN DISPLAY

The image of the Galaxy zooms into the Delta Quadrant (on the far side of the galactic disc). As we zoom in closer, several coloured closely fitting polygons with same-coloured points at their centres appear. A scale in light-years appears at the right-hand side of the screen.

SEVEN

This shows the known political spheres of influence in this area of the Delta Quadrant on Stardate 53890. The coloured points represent the governmental bases of the various powers.

JANEWAY nods in comprehension. Seven touches another control and a red point appears near the graphic of a supernova remnant.

SEVEN

This point is the Destroyers' artificial wormhole. I will now advance the display on to Stardate 53900.

A massive red stain begins to spread out from the red point. In seconds the blue polygon nearest the point blinks out as the growing red stain overwhelms the blue point at its heart. JANEWAY sighs and shakes her head.

SEVEN

On Stardate 53899.2, the Adronai civilisation was the first to fall to the Destroyer advance.

JANEWAY

[Grim] The first, but not the last.

SEVEN

Indeed. I will now advance the display to show the current known

strategic situation. The red polygon will display areas known to be totally under the Destroyers' control. Red starbursts will show the known locations of reported raids by Destroyer forces.

The red stain suddenly blooms outward. Over a dozen other polygons vanish. Still the red polygon grows larger, completely filling the display. The display zooms out, the scale at the right-hand side compressing accordingly. It zooms out for a very long time. The red polygon takes up the inner quarter of the display, but red starbursts appear right up to the edges.

JANEWAY gasps and is lost for words for a long moment.

JANEWAY

Merciful God! Seven, please tell me that this is a worst-case scenario.

SEVEN

[Dispassionately] The display shows the current strategic situation. The Destroyers completely control an area of a radius of about 120 light years. We have received reports of Destroyer raids up to 500 light years from the wormhole. The most distant raid reported is the destruction of a Maalon waste convoy. That attack was 1,145 light years from Destroyer space.

JANEWAY

My god! Two weeks, Seven! All that in just two weeks?

SEVEN

[Grim] The Destroyers are most efficient.

JANEWAY has to sit down at this news. She rests her head in her hands for a moment before speaking.

JANEWAY

[Hollow and hopeless] Can you project how long it will take the Destroyers to overwhelm the entire galaxy completely?

SEVEN

There are many variables, but it is possible to make an acceptably accurate projection.

SEVEN taps some commands into her console. After a moment, there is a BEEP.

SEVEN

The best projection we have with available data indicates that the Destroyers will eliminate all resistance within one standard year. The actual subjugation of the civilisations of the galaxy will take some time longer.

JANEWAY

[Hollow] Why?

SEVEN

[Concerned] I'm sorry, Captain?

JANEWAY

All this destructionâ€¦ It defeats the imagination, Seven. What is so important that they have to do this?

SEVEN is very concerned. She crouches before the seated JANEWAY.

SEVEN

The Destroyers are imperialists in the most fundamental meaning of the word, Captain. They believe that they have the inherit right to rule over the entire universe.

JANEWAY

[Scornful] That's a religious attitude, Seven. I can't believe that such an advanced race could subscribe to suchâ€¦ [Beat] poisonous nonsense.

SEVEN cocks her head.

SEVEN

From the very little the Borg were able to assimilate regarding the Destroyers, Captain, they have enjoyed superior abilities to their competitors from their earliest history. [Beat] Since they first emerged as a space-going civilisation 25 million years ago, they have enjoyed many technological and scientific advances.

JANEWAY looks up.

JANEWAY

That's incredible, Seven, but how does it affect their attitude to the rest of us?

SEVEN

[Sighs] Imagine if humans were the first species in our galaxy to attain to warp drive and other significant breakthroughs, Captain.

JANEWAY frowns as she considers the consequences.

JANEWAY

It would lead to a kind of arrogance. If no one were our equal or superior, we would believe that we were somehow specialâ€¦ better than the other species. It is the sort of attitude developing intelligent species has before they make first contact with other space-going races.

SEVEN nods

SEVEN

If Humans were the most advanced race in the galaxy, it would be natural for you to believe that. Your species would imagine that it is not an accident of history or evolution, but that, in some strange way, Humans were inherently superior to all other life forms.

SEVEN gestures to the MAIN DISPLAY, with its real-time image of the growing Destroyer dominion in our galaxy.

SEVEN

This is what happened to the Destroyers. They see the universe in a different way to us, Captain. This gives them an insight into creation that we cannot share. From that insight comes arrogance, and the power to make a reality out of arrogance. They are not interested in conquest for conquest's sake, Captain. They conquer because it is their duty. They think they are helping us by making us part of their universal order. To the Destroyers, it is their destiny to rule the universe.

JANEWAY stands up, resolute and angry.

JANEWAY

[Harsh] Well, then we have to educate them, Seven. It's time they learnt that they cannot push us around at will.

SEVEN

That will not be easy, Captain.

JANEWAY

[Wry] It never is. Are there any cultures in this area that can help us win this war?

SEVEN touches a few controls and the image on the MAIN DISPLAY scrolls slightly to the right. Several coloured polygons boarder the red area controlled by the Destroyers. There are very few red starbursts within this area.

SEVEN

There are several races in this galactic sector that appear to be moving towards forming a multi-cultural alliance similar to the Federation. The Destroyers have yet to move against them, possibly realising that they represent a much greater threat. Instead, they have concentrated on dealing with the more divided races in other areas.

JANEWAY looks thoughtful.

JANEWAY

What is their technological level?

SEVEN

Approximately Level Eight on the standard scale Captain. They are broadly equivalent to the Federation about 100 years ago.

JANEWAY nods to herself.

JANEWAY

Their nearest borders are about 80 light years from here. That's a good month's travel, even at maximum warp.

SEVEN

Additionally, some of the heaviest Destroyer activity lies in between them and us. I have collated reports of mining operations and the assembly of shipyards and other infrastructure.

JANEWAY

[Grimaces] There is no chance of sneaking the _Voyager_ through such heavy activity.

JANEWAY gets up and paces a little, fiddling with her com-badge. Finally, she nods decisively.

JANEWAY

The _Delta Flyer_ could make it. That ship is powerful enough to defend itself if we add the same modifications to its tactical systems. [Taps com-badge] All senior officers report to the briefing room.

FADE

ACT 5

INT. SHUTTLE BAY

Several ENGINEERS are working on the DELTA FLYER.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's Log: Stardate 53915.0. After carefully considering the tactical and strategic situation, I have decided to make contact with several advanced warp-capable cultures in the area immediately around the war zone. I hope to exchange our advanced technology for their help in defeating the Destroyers.

INT. VOYAGER CORRIDOR

A determined-looking JANEWAY walks down the corridor. We follow her as she enters a TURBOLIFT. The doors snap shut.

JANEWAY (v/o)

[Firm] Let the record show that I, and I alone, am responsible for this decision. I fully recognise that this represents a first-degree violation of the Prime Directive. It is my view, backed up by the data gathered over the past two weeks, that there is no other course

open to this crew if we are to prevent the Destroyers from ultimately overrunning the entire galaxy.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

JANEWAY is standing at the head of the table with all the senior crew sitting at the table. SEVEN stands at the viewscreen, which is showing a small-scale reproduction of the strategic map from Astrometrics.

JANEWAY

We are beyond debate, ladies and gentlemen. Every hour we delay, the Destroyers further strengthen their positions and make it that much more unlikely that we can defeat them in the long run.

CHAKOTAY

Captain, while I appreciate your feelings, I really don't feel comfortable about you flying off on the Delta Flyer on an open ended mission. Your place is here on the Voyager. Let me go instead.

TUVOK

I must concur with Commander Chakotay, Captain. The tactical situation is too precarious for you to absent yourself in a vulnerable auxiliary vessel.

JANEWAY smiles and shakes her head.

JANEWAY

Chakotay, Tuvok, your loyalty and friendship are welcome, but you have to appreciate why I have to do this. Simply put, we must convince these other races to assist us. They will feel the urgency if I go. A normal ambassadorial party could never convey the same need.

PARIS

All right, Captain, but at bring Harry and me along. You'll need your best hands if the Destroyers try to intercept you.

JANEWAY

Thank you, Tom, but I'm not looking for volunteers. Seven and Neelix will accompany me, but I need everyone else here on the Voyager, continuing to research ways to reduce the enemy's technological advantage.

CHAKOTAY scowls, but it is obvious he cannot do anything about JANEWAY's decision. JANEWAY looks around. No one else seems interested in commenting.

JANEWAY

As there are no other comments, dismissed.

The crew file out. JANEWAY grabs CHAKOTAY and holds him back.

JANEWAY

Chakotay, winning this war is your absolute first priority. Your first, no matter what, do you understand?

CHAKOTAY

What are you saying, Katherine?

JANEWAY

[Sighs] If I am lost or captured, then I expect you to prosecute the war as best as you can.

CHAKOTAY is about to protest, but JANEWAY cuts him off.

JANEWAY

Don't argue Chakotay. [Closes eyes and draws deep breath] You must not even allow the safety of this ship and her crew to come first. If it comes down to a choice between stopping the Destroyers or saving the ship and all hands, then my standing orders are that you do whatever you can to stop the Destroyers. Is that clear, Commander?

CHAKOTAY

[Horrified] Spirits, Katherineâ€

JANEWAY

[Louder & firm] Is that clear?

CHAKOTAY visibly swallows and finally nods reluctantly.

CHAKOTAY

Clear, Captain. Don't make me have to obey those orders.

JANEWAY manages a smile.

JANEWAY

I don't intend to!

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD

The DELTA FLYER exits the VOYAGER's shuttle bay, curves toward our POV and flies overhead.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

JANEWAY and SEVEN sit at the middle seats, CAREY sits at the rear engineering station and Ensign Steven MOGASU sits at the pilot's station. NEELIX sits next to SEVEN at the auxiliary

station.

JANEWAY

—

Delta Flyer to _Voyager_, we are clear of the launch bay.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

Roger that, Flyer. You are free and clear to manoeuvre at your discretion.

INT. VOYAGER BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY stands in the centre of the BRIDGE. Everyone is at their stations. KIM's station begins to bleep wildly.

KIM

(Urgent) Commander, I have two Destroyer capital ships and at least six fighter-class vessels approaching at 100 mark
54!

CHAKOTAY

Battle stations!

LIGHTS and SOUNDS " Red Alert

CHAKOTAY

—

Voyager to _Delta Flyer_. Captain, we have two Destroyer warships and at least a half dozen fighters bearing in on us. I recommend that you return to the ship immediately.

F/X " DEEP SPACE

Two Destroyer warships scream overhead. One has two hulls and three spines on either side of the double hull; one has one hull and three spines. They are both clearly more powerful than the CHIMERA scout our heroes defeated earlier in the episode. They are surrounded by six single-hulled & triple-spine fighters.

INT. VOYAGER COCKPIT

SEVEN is working her console, her brow furrowed with concentration.

SEVEN

We will not be able to effect a docking before the Destroyer vessels are in firing range.

JANEWAY

—

Voyager, we're already too far away, if we try to return, we will both be sitting ducks. I'll try to punch through the Destroyers' formation and proceed with the mission. Keep them busy as long as possible.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

I'll try Captain, but I can't make promises against these odds.

JANEWAY

[Firm] Remember your orders, mister.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

[Grim] Yes Captain. _Voyager_ out.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The Destroyer DART-class fighters race past. A few seconds later, the two Destroyer warships, a HAMMER heavy destroyer and a SABRE light destroyer scream overhead out of the Adronai Sun.

F/X â€" View from DELTA FLYER cockpit

JANEWAY

Ready Photon Missiles. Target the lead fighter. Mr. Mogasu, fly us right at those fighters at maximum power.

MOGASU

[Nervous] Yes, Captain!

SEVEN

Missiles locked.

JANEWAY

Wait for itâ€|

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD IN B/G

The DELTA FLYER flies right towards our POV, firing two emerald green MISSILES. We track the missiles as they shoot past, detonating around the leader of a group of four DARTs. The DART tumbles out of formation, golden fire trailing from its right-hand spine.

A second later, the DELTA FLYER punches through the centre of the formation under full power.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

JANEWAY is looking out her side window at the disabled DART tumble past.

JANEWAY

Tough ship! That barrage would destroy any other ship of that size.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The DARTs scatter. After a moment of fast looping manoeuvres two fighters slot in behind the FLYER while the third heads toward the Voyager.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

We see electric-blue energy pulses flashing past the side windows. NEELIX visibly winces.

SEVEN

We have two fighters in pursuit, Captain.

JANEWAY

Open fire with our rear phasers, Seven. Try to keep them back. Mr. Mogasu, evasive manoeuvres pattern epsilon.

MOGASU

Pattern epsilon, aye.

NEELIX

Lets' hope that this is evening the odds for the _Voyager_.

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD

The VOYAGER rises and turns away from the asteroids. The ship fires six torpedoes from its forward launchers. It then pitches down, curves back towards the asteroids and accelerates off the bottom of the shot.

New POV: the Destroyer ships closing in. The torpedoes detonate around them, but don't seem to make much of a difference. The SABRE fires its main gun.

New POV: the VOYAGER turning hard through the ASTEROID FIELD. The electric-blue beam strikes a medium-sized rock, which instantly explodes with a golden-white flash. The VOYAGER fires its rear upper phaser banks.

INT. BRIDGE

The CREW are flung forward by an impact that is accompanied by an enormous hollow 'bang.'

CHAKOTAY

Damage report!

KIM

Shields are at 80%, sir.

TUVOK

Commander, the Destroyer capital ships are pulling back and allowing their fighters to engage us.

TUVOK frowns at his console.

TUVOK

The Destroyer fighters are emitting a jamming signal that has disrupted our phaser targeting sensors. Their speed and manoeuvrability makes manual targeting problematic.

CHAKOTAY checks the centre console. His face lights with inspiration.

CHAKOTAY

We'll just have to limit their manoeuvring options, Tuvok. Mr. Paris, take us behind that large asteroid at 087 mark 352 at half impulse. Mr. Tuvok, stand by all phasers.

PARIS

Yes, sir!

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

POV from above a kilometre-wide asteroid. The VOYAGER curves behind the asteroid so it is between it and the Destroyer ships. The three DARTS break formation and curve around the asteroid at different angles. One follows the VOYAGER, one goes over the pole of the asteroid, and one goes around the other side of the asteroid, aiming to come head-on to the VOYAGER.

New POV looking aft from beside the VOYAGER's main hull

A Dart appears from behind the asteroid. The VOYAGER fires its upper rear phaser banks repeatedly, hitting the DART. The fighter explodes into a white fireball.

Our POV pans around to looking forward and upward from the VOYAGER. The other two DARTS come over the horizon about thirty degrees apart, firing their pulse cannon. The impacts illuminate the VOYAGER's shields.

INT. BRIDGE

The impacts are throwing everyone around. The lights flicker, and sparks spit from behind wall panels.

KIM

Shields are down to 45%!

CHAKOTAY

Return fire!

F/X " Near Asteroid

The VOYAGER fires its forward phasers, hitting the Dart on a collision course, but missing the other fighter. Our POV moves back from the Asteroid as the DARTS swing away from the VOYAGER. The starship fires its port main phaser banks, hitting both DARTS, but not doing any apparent damage.

New POV, behind the HAMMER and the SABRE, looking towards the Asteroid

The Destroyers are holding station on the other side of the Asteroid. A blue nimbus of energy surrounds the forward-facing 'fangs' of the HAMMER. The SABRE breaks to the right and accelerates away.

INT. BRIDGE

KIM's console is bleeping frantically at him.

KIM

They're getting ready to fire their primary weapon!

CHAKOTAY

Get us out of here, Mr. Paris. Full emergency impulse power!

PARIS is already pushing the VOYAGER forward and away from the asteroid.

F/X ASTEROID FIELD

The VOYAGER rotates and accelerates directly away from the asteroid.

New POV: On the other side of the asteroid, the HAMMER fires its main gun.

New POV: From space, looking back towards the asteroid.

The VOYAGER racing away from Asteroid. The asteroid flickers and a grey-green shock wave races across its surface like a ripple on a pond running backwards. When the shock wave reaches a point, the asteroid explodes with a golden white flash. The explosion knocks the VOYAGER forwards.

After a second, the VOYAGER stabilises. The POV rotates to a view looking over the Bridge off to the right. The SABRE moves sideways from behind an asteroid and fires two TORPEDOES.

INT. BRIDGE

Alarms begin to bleep and buzz.

TUVOK

Incoming!

F/X " DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER performs a series of evasive manoeuvres, dodging fire

from two pursuing DARTs. A trio of electric-blue pulses hit the FLYER's rear shields

INT. COCKPIT

CAREY

Shields are down to 33%, Captain. We can't take another hit.

MOGASU

Evasive manoeuvres are just no good, Captain. Those Destroyer fighters are far more manoeuvrable than we are.

JANEWAY

Then we'll have to get creative Mr. Mogasu. Roll 90 degrees port and pitch up at full thrust.

F/X " DEEP SPACE

The FLYER rolls onto its side and suddenly pulls 'up.' The DARTs scream around in a tight circle, staying with the FLYER.

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY

Invert and pitch up again Mr. Mogasu. [Beat] Repeat that manoeuvre once more.

F/X - DEEP SPACE

As the FLYER continues it's manoeuvre, the DARTS fall out of position and scream ahead of the super-shuttlecraft

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY

Seven, target the rear fighter and fire all phasers, continual cycle.

F/X " VIEW THROUGH COCKPIT WINDOW

There are two DARTS in view. Two phaser blasts hit the nearer DART and the fighters break in opposite directions.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Stay with our target, Mr. Mogasu.

MOGASU (v/o)

Aye, Captain.

The star field whirls as the FLIER pursues its target. Phasers continue to flash towards the DART, occasionally missing if the turn is too tight. After five hits, the DART explodes.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

A DART curves towards our POV and fires an electric blue MISSILE.

INT. COCKPIT

SEVEN reacts to the data on her monitor.

SEVEN

Captain! Singularity Missile incoming!

JANEWAY

Evade!

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The FLYER rolls sharply to the left, yaws to the left and pitches down. The MISSILE shoots over the top. The FLYER continues to turn until it is flying towards our POV. In the background, the MISSILE turns and swings towards the FLYER.

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY is watching her monitor, tracking both missile and fighter.

JANEWAY

Seven, target the missile with our rear phasers. Keep hitting it until it blows. Mr. Mogasu, evasive manoeuvres, pattern beta.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

POV: looking towards the FLYER from the MISSILE. The FLYER begins to swerve up and down, left and right. The rear phaser bank begins to fire. The first few shot misses, but the next two do not. The first hits a shield, but the next detonates the missile, which implodes with a blue flash, creating a brief 'gravitational lens' effect.

A trio of blue energy pulses strikes the FLYER on the port flank, knocking it sideways.

INT. COCKPIT

The impact knocks everyone to the right. A shower of sparks rain from the entrance to the working area. Several alarms sound.

MOGASU

[Angry] Damn! [Looks as JANEWAY] Sorry, Captain, they used their speed advantage to flank us.

JANEWAY

Damage report!

SEVEN

Shields are at 8% and falling. Hull breach in mid-section.

CAREY jumps to his feet.

CAREY

I'll seal the hull breach.

NEELIX

I'll help you, Joe.

CAREY

Thanks, Neelix.

JANEWAY looks worriedly at the still-sparking panels at the rear of the compartment. Suddenly, inspiration strikes.

JANEWAY

Mr. Mogasu, back full on port engine. Wait a second, and then go to ahead full port and back full starboard.

MOGASU looks at her quizzically before replying.

MOGASU

[Puzzled] Aye, Captain.

F/X " DEEP SPACE

The FLYER suddenly swerves hard to the left, almost spinning on its axis. The DART races past and turns sharply to follow. As the DART turns to get behind the FLYER, the FLYER turns sharply to the right, again, almost turning on its axis. The combatants shoot past each other on reciprocal headings.

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY is hanging on to her seat for dear life.

JANEWAY

[Louder than usual] Pitch up 180 degrees, Mr. Mogasu, then invert. Seven, fire forward phasers as they bear!

F/X " DEEP SPACE

The FLYER pitches up in a tight curve that reverses its heading. It then rolls over so its 'up' is the same as that of our POV. It is, of course, an "Innalmann Turn." The phasers begin to fire

New POV: The DART is in mid-turn as the phasers begin to strike home. It shudders and continues to turn. A few shots miss, but most carve into the DART's prow. The front of the fighter blows off with a golden flash. The rest of the fighter tumbles.

New POV: The FLYER shoots past the tumbling wreck, which detonates behind it.

INT COCKPIT

JANEWAY sits back and blows out her breath. MOGASU is suddenly all smiles. NEELIX and CAREY return from the middle compartment, a little smoke-blackened but otherwise intact.

MOGASU

Outstanding! They don't teach that at the Academy!

SEVEN

[Curious] Where did you learn fighter verses fighter manoeuvres Captain?

JANEWAY

[Smiles} Mr. Paris' "Air Battles of World War 2" holodeck program, of course. [Serious] Where is the _Voyager_?

SEVEN

We have lost direct sensor contact, Captain. However, several high-energy discharges within the asteroid field are consistent with energy weapons-fire.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The VOYAGER is coming right at us, slowly curving away to the left. The main lower port and ventral phasers fire off the bottom of the screen. Behind them, the two torpedoes flash towards the starship. A trio of pulse cannon bolts hit the lower shields and blue-white static rolls over the lower hull.

INT. BRIDGE.

There is a bang and the Engineering console explodes, showering sparks over the bridge.

CHAKOTAY

Damage report!

TUVOK

Shields down to 13%

KIM

I'm getting power surges all through the power system. We may lose main power at this rate!

CHAKOTAY

Engineering, what's your status down there?

INT. ENGINEERING

TORRES is manning her console as alarms blare and coolant jets from a leak in the side of the warp core. A fire burns untended on the upper level.

TORRES

It's no good, Chakotay. Their weapons are directly affecting the power nodes again. We can't withstand one more hit.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

Can you re-enforce the shields?

TORRES

The shield generators are overloading as it is. If we try any cute tricks, we will loose them!

INT. BRIDGE.

CHAKOTAY looks at his console and shakes his head angrily.

CHAKOTAY

[Grim] All right, lets do this the Maquis way. Mr. Paris, on my command, go to ramming speed on a collision course with that smaller vessel. Mr. Tuvok, fire phasers on a continual cycle. Bridge to rear torpedo bay. Set two torpedoes to kinetic impact mode and set them to drift using steering jets to intercept the torpedoes.

There is a brief pause.

TECHNICIAN (v/o)

Program set, Commander.

CHAKOTAY

Fire torpedoes. Mr. Paris, y-minus thrusters full.

F/X " The VOYAGER fires two torpedoes from its rear tubes. The torpedoes do not ignite, but simply move away at medium speed.

New POV: Looking aft towards the HAMMER. The TORPEDOES close in, but the two 'dud' photon torpedoes drift right into their path. The four projectiles meet simultaneously with a dramatic blue flash. Space warps dramatically.

INT. BRIDGE

The gravitational shock wave from the detonation makes the ship shudder. CHAKOTAY is hanging on to his seat as consoles spit sparks.

CHAKOTAY

Now, Mr. Paris!

F/X â€" The VOYAGER shoots from underneath the explosion at full power, firing its phasers repeatedly. Torpedoes flash from the forward tubes.

New POV: The SABRE takes the full brunt of the attack, torpedoes detonating around its shields and phasers carving deeper and deeper into them. Several shots begin to carve into the hull.

INT. BRIDGE

Close-up on CHAKOTAY. He is on the edge of his seat.

CHAKOTAY

Mr. Paris, take us close under the belly of that ship! As close as you dare!

PARIS is sweating at his controls.

PARIS

You've got it Commander; we'll be eating in THEIR mess hall tonight!

F/X â€" The VOYAGER ducks under the SABRE just as the HAMMER and the SABRE fire their pulse cannon. Instead of catching the VOYAGER in the crossfire, they hit each other.

INT. BRIDGE

TUVOK

The shields of the smaller warship have failed
Commander!

CHAKOTAY

[Loud and firm] Fire all phasers, Mr. Tuvok! Carve them open!

F/X â€" The VOYAGER's phasers slice into the SABRE's hull, tearing long blazing breaches in the hull. There are a series of explosions that spread, finally consuming the SABRE. The VOYAGER shoots out of the fireball.

New POV: The HAMMER coming in from the VOYAGER's starboard flank.

New POV: Looking towards an oncoming VOYAGER. Several blasts from the HAMMER's pulse cannon smash into the VOYAGER. The first rips into the starboard nacelle, tearing it open and unleashing a silvery-blue trail of plasma. The next smashes into the secondary hull, ripping apart the hull from behind the deflector dish to the root of the support pylon of the starboard nacelle. Flames boil out before force fields seal the breached compartments. The impact knocks the VOYAGER violently off course. The ship's interior and running lights flicker and dim.

INT. BRIDGE

There is chaos. Most of the lights are out and the Master Situation display is now a flaming crater. Most of the overhead cable trunks have broken open and all the display monitors show only static. Film using a shuddering camera mount to emphasise the problems.

CHAKOTAY finally rises in to view. He helps PARIS to his feet and sits the younger man in the helm chair.

CHAKOTAY

Damage report!

KIM drags himself to his feet.

KIM

Main power out! Hull breach on decks 12 through 16, sections three through twelve.

TUVOK

Forward torpedo launchers and phaser bank seven off-line. Shield generators off-line.

PARIS

We've lost the starboard nacelle. Warp and impulse engines are off-line.

CHAKOTAY

[Under his breath] My godâ€¦!

COMPUTER (v/o)

Damage to warp core. Containment failure in two minutes.

CHAKOTAY looks up with a horrified expression.

CHAKOTAY

Engineering, what's happening down there?

Silence.

CHAKOTAY

B'Elanna, respond!

VORIK (v/o)

This is Ensign Vorik, Commander. [Cough] Lieutenant Torres is unconscious.

CHAKOTAY

What's your status, Ensign?

VORIK (v/o)

The warp core cooling system has been destroyed. We have lost our auto-eject system. Do I have your permission to commence a manual ejection?

CHAKOTAY

Don't wait for it, Ensign, eject the warp core!

COMPUTER (v/o)

Damage to warp core. Containment failure in ninety seconds.

INT. ENGINEERING

The place is a shambles. Most of the consoles are dark. Clouds of leaking coolant pool around the warp core, which is glowing a bright blue colour. It is at almost full output. A few medics tend to injured and dying engineers.

VORIK runs from console to console, trying to access the core ejection system. For an unemotional Vulcan, he is clearly very rattled.

VORIK

[Annoyed] If only Lieutenant Torres were available to tend her charges!

INT. BRIDGE

KIM is working his console. He grimaces in triumph as his sensor display screen suddenly clears.

KIM

Commander, I have partial sensors on-line!

CHAKOTAY

Show me the enemy ships, Lieutenant.

F/X " VIEWSCREEN

We see an aft view. The image is poor quality, with static, blurred or double images and occasional loss of colour.

The HAMMER is slowly coming into position. The three surviving DARTs form an arc above it. A blue nimbus of energy forms around the six forward-facing 'fangs.'

INT. BRIDGE

KIM

They're preparing to fire their main gun again.

PARIS

[Ironic] They must really like using that thing.

COMPUTER (v/o)

Damage to warp core. Containment failure in sixty seconds.

CHAKOTAY

[Bitter] It's almost a moot point.

VORIK (v/o)

Bridge, we have ejected the warp core.

F/X Sequence " WARP CORE EJECTION

INT. BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY's face brightens for a second. Then he becomes grim and serious for a second.

CHAKOTAY

Mr. Kim, are there any major asteroids in the area?

KIM

Yes sir. I have a six-kilometre asteroid at 022 mark 009. Range is about 2,500 kilometres.

CHAKOTAY

Mr. Paris lay in a heading and give me all the speed you can manage.

PARIS

[Grim] We're already on our way, sir.

TUVOK

Commander, we do not have the speed to reach safety before the Destroyers open fire. In any case, the ship is too badly damaged to survive a shockwave.

CHAKOTAY

[Grim] Maybe, Mr. Tuvok. I aim to take a few of those bastards with me!

TUVOK

Commander, this is highly illogical!

PARIS

Sir, I think I can get us through the shock wave this time!

CHAKOTAY's face lights up.

CHAKOTAY

Do it, Tom.

KIM

They're firing!

CHAKOTAY

[Shouts] Evade!

F/X " ASTEROID BELT

The HAMMER fires. The VOYAGER rises vertically up on its landing thrusters, avoiding the shot, which strikes the asteroid. The asteroid is shaken by the green-grey distortion wave and explodes with a mighty white flash.

The VOYAGER is swept aside by the massive shockwave. A second later, it hits the Destroyer ships. Two of the DARTs explode immediately. The HAMMER is shaken and two of its spines buckle.

Almost immediately, the VOYAGER's discarded warp core explodes with a blue-white flash. The HAMMER is torn apart by the massive explosion. The last DART is sent tumbling into a rock and it smashes apart.

F/X " VEIW FROM COCKPIT WINDOWS OF DELTA FLYER.

We see the ASTEROID FIELD and the bright flash of the warp core explosion.

JANEWAY (v/o)

[Aghast] Oh my God! Seven, was that what I think it was?

SEVEN freezes, she wears a stricken expression. After a long pause, she picks at her controls.

SEVEN

[Hoarse] Captain" That was the explosion of a Federation warp core. I am detecting both Destroyer and Federation alloys in considerable quantities" I" I cannot"

JANEWAY turns to look at SEVEN. The Borg woman is crying.

SEVEN

[Stifles sobs] Captain, I cannot detect the _Voyager_.

JANEWAY

[Quiet] Merciful God"

JANEWAY closes her eyes, tears streaming down her

cheeks.

JANEWAY

[Quiet] Lord; please watch over themâ€¦ Take them home.

There is a long, stricken silence in the COCKPIT. Every face reflects shock, grief and anger. SEVEN's console begins to bleep at her. She shakes her head and checks her displays.

SEVEN

Captain, I read four more Destroyer fighters approaching our location.

JANEWAY does not respond.

SEVEN

Captain!

JANEWAY shakes her head.

JANEWAY

[Hoarse] Get us out of here, Mr. Mogasu. As soon as we are clear of the system, accelerate to maximum warp and take us to our first destination.

MOGASU

[Quiet] Yes, Captain.

JANEWAY goes silent as the DELTA FLYER accelerates. She is still weeping and begins to chew pensively on her thumbnail.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER shoots past, accelerating to warp. A few seconds later, four DARTs come into shot. Two curve off and jump to warp on the same heading as the DELTA FLYER. The other two curve towards our POV. We track them as they shoot past and head off towards the ASTEROID FIELD.

CONTINUITY

To be continued next time on Star Trek â€" Voyager!

4. Dark Abyss

> <meta name="Generator"> The Dark Times Cycle, Episode 4 â€" 'Dark Abyss'

The Dark Times Cycle, Episode 4 â€" 'Dark Abyss'

By Ben Russell-Gough

Star Trek â€" Voyager, and all characters and technologies of the Star Trek universe are the sole property of Paramount Pictures, a

division of Viacom Communications. No breach of copyright or trademark rights intended. This is a non-profit work written for the author's (and the readers') enjoyment.

Species 704 (The Destroyers) are my work.

Continuity note: This story occurs at the end of season 6/the beginning of season 7 and is an ALTERNATE UNIVERSE story. It is in place of UNIMATRIX ZERO, as I think the Borg are over-exposed!

This story is presented in the form of a screenplay by way of an experiment. Please tell me what you think!

After the terrifying battle against the Destroyers, Captain Janeway must continue the fight aloneâ€|

TEASER

CONTINUITY

Last time on Star Trek â€" Voyagerâ€|

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY is standing at the centre of the BRIDGE, addressing the crew.

JANEWAY

We are at war. This isn't a war any of us wanted or expected, but it is a war we must fight nonetheless. If the Destroyers are not beaten while their presence in our galaxy is still small, then we have virtually no hope of stopping them from overrunning every civilisation in the galaxy, [Quiet, but clear] including the Federation.

Brief cut of various OFFICERS reactions to JANEWAY's speech

JANEWAY

This is it, people: the time you keep on reading about in the history texts. This is the moment that will define future history for millennia to come. Either we win this war [beat, gravely] or the future ends, here and now.

Cut to BRIDGE, later on. The crew is tense.

KIM

[Urgent] Captain! I am picking up an all-frequency distress call. Captain, it's the Adronai. They say they're under attack by ships that match known Destroyer designs.

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

JANEWAY is sitting on her couch, watching a few medium-sized lumps of rock tumble past. Her face is expressionless, but the way she is clutching her coffee mug betrays her inner torment.

CHAKOTAY enters holding a PADD. He gives it to JANEWAY, who scans its contents apathetically.

CHAKOTAY

The system looks a total loss, Captain. Both class-M worlds and a class-L that the Adronai heavily colonised are gone. Every moon and even vaguely colonisable body has a fresh set of craters and there are many refined alloy masses floating about the system. None have any power emissions.

JANEWAY checks the padd, her face cold. She sighs and looks up at CHAKOTAY with a grim expression.

JANEWAY

The Destroyers have named the game, Chakotay: Total war.

CHAKOTAY

[Angry] This isn't war, Katherine, it's genocide.

INT. ADRONAI STATION, DAMAGED CORRIDOR

SEVEN looks to the end of the side corridor and gasps.

Her POV. The corridor is empty, then there is an oval area filled with a blue-green rippling effect like the rippling of a disturbed pond. The ripples take a tall insectoid shape and a Destroyer soldier stands before us.

INT. VOYAGER SCIENCE LAB

JANEWAY is standing with TORRES, SEVEN and KIM looking at a captured Destroyer Energy Rifle.

JANEWAY turns away and heads out of the LAB.

JANEWAY

We've been on the defensive since the start of this war, people. [Slight smile] With these modifications, I think that we will be able to go hunting.

INT. BRIDGE

KIM

Captain! We've detected a Destroyer starship, about the size of a scout, approaching the asteroid field at about half light-speed. They are slowing fast and entering the field.

JANEWAY

Red alert! All hands to Battle Stations.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

POV " Looking forward from the VOYAGER towards the CHIMERA scout

ship. The VOYAGER swerves to the left as the CHIMERA races towards them. Golden phaser blasts strike out from the starboard main and ventral phaser banks. The blasts visibly flare against the shields of the Destroyer vessel. They glow a glassy blue shade at the impact points.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD. Dense rock cloud formed from a disintegrating asteroid.

The VOYAGER tilts her nose up and accelerates. As the ship clears the worst of the debris, our POV tilts upward to show the CHIMERA hovering outside the cloud. The VOYAGER's two main upper phaser banks fire, hitting the CHIMERA and causing the scout to jerk back.

The VOYAGER's main lower phasers fire, but the CHIMERA ducks forward and down, dodging the shots. The Destroyer scout's forward arrays fire twice, the blasts connect with the VOYAGER's shield. The Federation ship is knocked back into a fair-sized rock.

INT. BRIDGE

There is chaos. The entire crew are blown backwards by the impact. Several consoles spit sparks and fire and two cable trunks collapse, spilling sparking cables everywhere. The main monitor on the Helm console explodes and begins to burn.

INT. ENGINEERING

TORRES looks up in horror. A massive tongue of flame roars up from behind the Warp Core. Several CREWMEN are blown away from their exploding consoles.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

POV looking back from the VOYAGER to the CHIMERA.

Six torpedoes launch from the VOYAGER's rear tubes and race towards the CHIMERA, spreading out to come at it from every direction. They do not detonate simultaneously, but at irregular intervals spread over about half a second.

The CHIMERA shudders and staggers drunkenly to the right. It's left-hand 'spine' crumples and emits a yellow-white cloud of crackling drive plasma.

New POV, from the CHIMERA looking forward towards the VOYAGER.

The Starship leaps upwards, its landing thrusters glowing blue at full power. The ship begins to rotate to the right, turning its prow to face the Chimera. The CHIMERA fires back, but the shots shoot below the rapidly rising VOYAGER.

POV - Above the VOYAGER, looking down and towards the CHIMERA.

The Voyager's phaser banks start firing one after the other. Their blasts are unusually bright and have brighter pulses racing down their length.

As the blasts strike home, they carve burning slashes into the CHIMERA's side along the aft section, between the 'spines' and the

triple 'boom' between the main hull and the prow.

F/X " VIEWSCREEN

The CHIMERA rolls and jerks away from the impacts, beginning to tumble. A massive yellow-white explosion boils out from between the spines. The explosions begin to spread forward. Finally the fires consume the entire ship and it disintegrates in a gigantic yellow-white fireball.

INT. BRIDGE

KIM

Target destroyed!

The ENTIRE CREW except TUVOK and JANEWAY cheer loudly. SEVEN turns from her console to hug a surprised KIM.

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

JANEWAY is reading a PADD with a distracted air. She keeps on shaking her head at whatever she is reading. TUVOK enters the READY ROOM with another PADD. He stands stiffly to attention until JANEWAY looks up with a wan smile.

JANEWAY

Our tactics may have been good Tuvok, but they weren't good enough. We won this one by luck alone.

TUVOK cocks his head thoughtfully.

JANEWAY

How am I going to win a war when I can barely win a battle?

TUVOK steeples his hands for a moment before replying.

TUVOK

One human bard once noted that 'no man is an island.' This truth does apply to our situation.

JANEWAY stands up and begins to pace as TUVOK continues.

TUVOK

This area of space has several warp-capable civilisations. While none of these civilisations approach the Federation in terms of technological sophistication, they could easily adapt our tactical modifications to their own technologies. It would increase their chances of survival by several orders of magnitude and possibly even give us sufficiently powerful allies to achieve our primary objectives.

INT. ASTROMETRICS

SEVEN is standing at her preferred console, watching something on the big MAIN DISPLAY. JANEWAY stands beside her.

F/X - MAIN DISPLAY

The image of the Galaxy zooms into the Delta Quadrant (on the far side of the galactic disc). As we zoom in closer, several coloured closely fitting polygons with same-coloured points at their centres appear. A scale in light-years appears at the right-hand side of the screen.

SEVEN

This shows the known political spheres of influence in this area of the Delta Quadrant on Stardate 53890. The coloured points represent the governmental bases of the various powers.

JANEWAY nods in comprehension. Seven touches another control and a red point appears near the graphic of a supernova remnant.

SEVEN

This point is the Destroyers' artificial wormhole. I will now advance the display on to Stardate 53900.

A massive red stain begins to spread out from the red point. In seconds the blue polygon nearest the point blinks out as the growing red stain overwhelms the blue point at its heart.

SEVEN

I will now advance the display to show the current known strategic situation. The red polygon will display areas known to be totally under the Destroyers' control. Red starbursts will show the known locations of reported raids by Destroyer forces.

The red stain suddenly blooms outward. Over a dozen other polygons vanish. Still the red polygon grows larger, completely filling the display. The display zooms out, the scale at the right-hand side compressing accordingly. It zooms out for a very long time. The red polygon takes up the inner quarter of the display, but red starbursts appear right up to the edges.

JANEWAY gasps and is lost for words for a long moment.

JANEWAY

Merciful God! Seven, please tell me that this is a worst-case scenario.

SEVEN

[Dispassionately] The display shows the current strategic situation. The Destroyers completely control an area of a radius of about 120 light years. We have received reports of Destroyer raids up to 500 light years from the wormhole.

JANEWAY has to sit down at this news. She rests her head in her hands for a moment before speaking.

JANEWAY

[Hollow and hopeless] Can you project how long it will take the Destroyers to overwhelm the entire galaxy completely?

SEVEN taps some commands into her console. After a moment, there is a BEEP.

SEVEN

The best projection we have with available data indicates that the Destroyers will eliminate all resistance within one standard year.

JANEWAY

Are there any cultures in this area that can help us win this war?

SEVEN touches a few controls and the image on the MAIN DISPLAY scrolls slightly to the right. Several coloured polygons boarder the red area controlled by the Destroyers. There are very few red starbursts within this area.

SEVEN

There are several races in this galactic sector that appear to be moving towards forming a multi-cultural alliance similar to the Federation.

JANEWAY looks thoughtful.

JANEWAY

Their nearest borders are about 80 light years from here. That's a good month's travel, even at maximum warp.

SEVEN

Additionally, some of the heaviest Destroyer activity lies in between them and us. I have collated reports of mining operations and the assembly of shipyards and other infrastructure.

JANEWAY

[Grimaces] There is no chance of sneaking the Voyager through such heavy activity.

JANEWAY gets up and paces a little, fiddling with her com-badge. Finally, she nods decisively.

JANEWAY

The Delta Flyer could make it. That ship is powerful enough to defend itself if we add the same modifications to its tactical systems.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The DELTA FLYER exits the VOYAGER's shuttle bay, curves toward our POV and flies overhead.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

JANEWAY and SEVEN sit at the middle seats, CAREY sits at the rear engineering station and Ensign Steven MOGASU sits at the pilot's station. NEELIX sits next to SEVEN at the auxiliary station.

JANEWAY

—

Delta Flyer to _Voyager_, we are clear of the launch bay.

INT. VOYAGER BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY stands in the centre of the BRIDGE. Everyone is at their stations. KIM's station begins to bleep wildly.

KIM

(Urgent) Commander, I have two Destroyer capital ships and at least six fighter-class vessels approaching at 100 mark 54!

CHAKOTAY

Battle stations!

LIGHTS and SOUNDS â€" Red Alert

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The Destroyer DART-class fighters race past. A few seconds later, the two Destroyer warships, a HAMMER heavy destroyer and a SABRE light destroyer scream overhead out of the Adronai Sun.

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD IN B/G

The DELTA FLYER flies right towards our POV, firing two emerald green MISSILES. We track the missiles as they shoot past, detonating around the leader of a group of four DARTs. The DART tumbles out of formation, golden fire trailing from its right-hand spine.

A second later, the DELTA FLYER punches through the centre of the formation under full power.

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD

The VOYAGER is coming right at us, slowly curving away to the left. The main lower port and ventral phasers fire off the bottom of the screen. Behind them, the two torpedoes flash towards the starship. A trio of pulse cannon bolts hit the lower shields and blue-white static rolls over the lower hull.

New POV â€" Looking down on a large asteroid as the VOYAGER curves behind it.

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD

POV - Looking aft from beside the VOYAGER's main hull. The VOYAGER is hugging the surface of a large asteroid.

A Dart appears from behind the asteroid. The VOYAGER fires its upper rear phaser banks repeatedly, hitting the DART. The fighter explodes into a white fireball.

Our POV pans around to looking forward and upward from the VOYAGER. The other two DARTS come over the horizon about thirty degrees apart, firing their pulse cannon. The impacts illuminate the VOYAGER's shields.

F/X " VIEW THROUGH DELTA FLYER'S COCKPIT WINDOW

There are two DARTS in view. Two phaser blasts hit the nearer DART and the fighters break in opposite directions.

The star field whirls as the FLIER pursues its target. Phasers continue to flash towards the DART, occasionally missing if the turn is too tight. After five hits, the DART explodes.

F/X " DEEP SPACE

The FLYER pitches up in a tight curve that reverses its heading. It then rolls over so its 'up' is the same as that of our POV. It is, of course, an "Innalman Turn." The phasers begin to fire

New POV: The DART is in mid-turn as the phasers begin to strike home. It shudders and continues to turn. A few shots miss, but most carve into the DART's prow. The front of the fighter blows off with a golden flash. The rest of the fighter tumbles.

New POV: The FLYER shoots past the tumbling wreck, which detonates behind it.

INT. BRIDGE.

CHAKOTAY looks at his console and shakes his head angrily.

CHAKOTAY

[Grim] All right, lets do this the Maquis way. Mr. Paris, on my command, go to ramming speed on a collision course with that smaller vessel. Mr. Tuvok, fire phasers on a continual cycle.

The gravitational shock wave from the detonation of two Singluarity Torpedoes makes the ship shudder. CHAKOTAY is hanging on to his seat as consoles spit sparks.

CHAKOTAY

Now, Mr. Paris!

F/X " The VOYAGER shoots from underneath the explosion at full power, firing its phasers repeatedly. Torpedoes flash from the forward tubes.

New POV: The SABRE takes the full brunt of the attack, torpedoes detonating around its shields and phasers carving deeper and deeper

into them. Several shots begin to carve into the hull.

INT. BRIDGE

Close-up on CHAKOTAY. He is on the edge of his seat.

CHAKOTAY

Mr. Paris, take us close under the belly of that ship! As close as you dare!

TUVOK

The shields of the smaller warship have failed
Commander!

CHAKOTAY

[Loud and firm] Fire all phasers, Mr. Tuvok! Carve them open!

F/X " The VOYAGER's phasers slice into the SABRE's hull, tearing long blazing breaches in the hull. There are a series of explosions that spread, finally consuming the SABRE. The VOYAGER shoots out of the fireball.

New POV: The HAMMER coming in from the VOYAGER's starboard flank.

New POV: Looking towards an oncoming VOYAGER. Several blasts from the HAMMER's pulse cannon smash into the VOYAGER. The first rips into the starboard nacelle, tearing it open and unleashing a silvery-blue trail of plasma. The next smashes into the secondary hull, ripping apart the hull from behind the deflector dish to the root of the support pylon of the starboard nacelle. Flames boil out before force fields seal the breached compartments. The impact knocks the VOYAGER violently off course. The ship's interior and running lights flicker and dim.

INT. BRIDGE

There is chaos. Most of the lights are out and the Master Situation display is now a flaming crater. Most of the overhead cable trunks have broken open and all the display monitors show only static. Film using a shuddering camera mount to emphasise the problems.

CHAKOTAY finally rises in to view. He helps PARIS to his feet and sits the younger man in the helm chair.

CHAKOTAY

Damage report!

KIM drags himself to his feet.

KIM

Main power out! Hull breach on decks 12 through 16, sections three through twelve.

PARIS

Warp and impulse engines are off-line.

COMPUTER (v/o)

Damage to warp core. Containment failure in two minutes.

CHAKOTAY looks up with a horrified expression.

F/X " VIEWSCREEN

We see an aft view. The image is poor quality, with static, blurred or double images and occasional loss of colour.

The HAMMER is slowly coming into position. The three surviving DARTs form an arc above it. A blue nimbus of energy forms around the six forward-facing 'fangs.'

INT. BRIDGE

KIM

They're preparing to fire their main gun again.

VORIK (v/o)

Bridge, we have ejected the warp core.

F/X Sequence " WARP CORE EJECTION

F/X " ASTEROID BELT

The HAMMER fires. The VOYAGER rises vertically up on its landing thrusters, avoiding the shot, which strikes the asteroid. The asteroid is shaken by the green-grey distortion wave and explodes with a mighty white flash.

The VOYAGER is swept aside by the massive shockwave. A second later, it hits the Destroyer ships. Two of the DARTs explode immediately. The HAMMER is shaken and two of its spines buckle.

Almost immediately, the VOYAGER's discarded warp core explodes with a blue-white flash. The HAMMER is torn apart by the massive explosion. The last DART is sent tumbling into a rock and it smashes apart.

F/X " VIEW FROM COCKPIT WINDOWS OF DELTA FLYER.

We see the ASTEROID FIELD and the bright flash of the warp core explosion.

JANEWAY (v/o)

[Aghast] Oh my God! Seven, was that what I think it was?

SEVEN freezes, she wears a stricken expression. After a long pause, she picks at her controls.

SEVEN

[Hoarse] Captain" That was the explosion of a Federation warp core.

I am detecting both Destroyer and Federation alloys in considerable quantitiesâ€¦ Iâ€¦ I cannotâ€¦

JANEWAY turns to look at SEVEN. The Borg woman is crying.

SEVEN

[Stifles sobs] Captain, I cannot detect the Voyager.

JANEWAY

[Quiet] Merciful Godâ€¦

JANEWAY closes her eyes, tears streaming down her cheeks.

JANEWAY

[Quiet] Lord; please watch over themâ€¦ Take them home.

There is a long, stricken silence in the COCKPIT. Every face reflects shock, grief and anger

JANEWAY

[Hoarse] Get us out of here, Mr. Mogasu.

MOGASU

[Quiet] Yes, Captain.

JANEWAY goes silent as the DELTA FLYER accelerates. She is still weeping and begins to chew pensively on her thumbnail.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER shoots past, accelerating to warp. A few seconds later, four DARTs come into shot. Two curve off and jump to warp on the same heading as the DELTA FLYER. The other two curve towards our POV. We track them as they shoot past and head off towards the ASTEROID FIELD.

CONTINUITY

And now the continuation!

FADE

[New opening to titles] SFX â€" The Voyager moving at sub light in deep space.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Space: The final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Voyager. Her ongoing mission, to find her way home. To cross a galaxy, carrying the dream of exploration beyond the farthest stars. To boldly go where no one has gone before!

Opening titles

ACT 1

F/X " DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER speeds past at warp drive.

INT. DELTA FLYER, COCKPIT

MOGASU sits at the helm and CAREY sits at the ops station. JANEWAY sits in her accustomed station behind the helm. She sips her coffee and reads a PADD.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's log: stardate 93964.2. It has been over a month since that terrible final battle in the Adronai system. A month since the crew of the _Delta Flyer_ last heard from our friends and family on the starship _Voyager_. [Quiet] We are a lost ship now. A shuttlecraft without a mother ship. I don't know whether the _Voyager_ survived that battle. The evidence suggests they haven't, but [becomes wry] I have learnt not to underestimate Commander Chakotay.

SEVEN enters and sits at the engineering console. She picks at the controls in a distracted fashion.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Without the support of the _Voyager_, I don't know if I can complete our mission to form an alliance to face the Destroyers. I don't even know if I can get this small ship with the remains of my crew home. Hell, I don't even know if we will survive the next few days.

[Firm] Nonetheless, I intend to carry on. If not because of the trillions of deaths that will be the price if we don't stop the Destroyers, then because I owe it to the crew of the _Voyager_.

The _Delta Flyer_ is now approaching our first port of call. A race known as the Yiriwans. They are an advanced race and a part of an inter-species alliance that I hope will recognise the urgency of facing the Destroyers.

MOGASU looks up from his console.

MOGASU

Captain? We are approaching the Yiriwa System. I am detecting two Yiriwan cruisers holding station at the rendezvous point.

JANEWAY sucks in a breath and puts down her coffee.

JANEWAY

Now we find out exactly how convincing I was during our message. Take us out of warp Ensign. Bring us to station keeping two hundred kilometres short of the cruisers. [Taps her com-badge] All hands report to the flight deck.

MOGASU

Aye, Captain.

MOGASU turns to his console.

F/X " DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER drops out of warp. Our POV tracks the super-shuttle as it zooms past and settles to a halt. In the distance, we can see sunlight glinting off a pair of starships.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

Janeway is looking at the main monitor on her console. Two Yiriwan cruisers hover on screen. They are somewhat reminiscent of Klingon designs, with a 'neck' and 'head' extending from a big hull. The ships have three 'wings.' The two lower wings have warp nacelles at the end. The upper 'wing' ends with a T-bar, possibly containing weapons or sensor arrays.

SEVEN is sitting at her console.

SEVEN

Captain, the Yiriwan commander is signalling us.

JANEWAY

On screen

The image changes to show a Yiriwan officer. The alien is an exotic sight. It has a thick reptilian hide, a mouth with an array of sharp teeth and three eyes.

YIRIWAN COMMANDER

You are Captain Katherine Janeway?

[NOTE: The YIRIWAN COMMANDER's lips do not synch with the voice in any way. This is a universal translator operation.]

JANEWAY

Yes, I have come to your system to

YIRIWAN COMMANDER

You will form up with our cruisers and follow our every manoeuvre. Any attempt to divert from our course will lead to your instant destruction.

The signal cuts off.

NEELIX

Charming people. Still, their willingness to hear our proposal indicates that they are actually more reasonable than they act.

JANEWAY smiles

JANEWAY

A masterful analysis Mr. Ambassador.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The two YIRIWAN CRUISERS rotate around their vertical axis and move off. The DELTA FLYER swoops in between them and follows them off.

INT. COCKPIT

NEELIX is reading a PADD to JANEWAY.

NEELIX

According to my research, the Yiriwans are a very aggressive people. However, they have a great love of the arts. Indeed, they seem to regard most of their martial skills as arts in their own right. Despite their aggressive demeanour, the Yiriwans rarely initiate hostilities without provocation. [Smiles] They think it uncultured to attack a foe without giving them a chance to prepare themselves.

JANEWAY

That could be a problem. There have only been a few minor instances of Destroyer activity in their space.

NEELIX

They do value their alliance with the other six races, Captain. If we can convince all of the others, the Yiriwans will join forces too.

JANEWAY

Is there anything we should look out for? Are there any social rules or subliminal insults we should avoid?

NEELIX consults his PADD.

NEELIX

Only one. [Chuckles] Apparently it is a taboo to stick your tongue out to a Yirivan. As reptiles, their sense of taste is very acute. To a Yirivan, if you stick out your tongue, then you are getting extra sensory data to attack. Try to avoid even moistening your lips if possible.

JANEWAY nods with a wry smile.

SEVEN looks up from her console.

SEVEN

Captain, we are approaching the Yirivan homeworld.

F/X â€" YIRIWA PRIME

The DELTA FLYER is still in formation with the two CRUISERS. Ahead is a marginal class-M world with no obvious large expanses of water (though several continent-sized lakes are visible). The planet is yellow-white in colour with the occasional splash of brown and green near the lakes. Three moons are in the sky.

SEVEN

The Yiriwans are hailing us.

JANEWAY nods.

YIRIWAN A.T.C.

Delta Flyer, assume an orbit at an altitude of 350 kilometres and await landing instructions.

F/X â€" YIRIWA PRIME

The DELTA FLYER enters orbit.

INT. COCKPIT

The crew are all craning to the left, looking out of the windows at the desert-like planet below.

YIRIWAN A.T.C. (v/o)

—

Delta Flyer, please copy your landing instructions.

JANEWAY

Um, Yiriwan Traffic Control, this is the _Delta Flyer_. We have a technology that permits us to directly transport to any location.

SEVEN shoots JANEWAY a slightly surprised look. JANEWAY shrugs. Now is the time for openness.

There is a strange scratching noise over the communications channel. It is possible that the YIRIWAN traffic controller is laughing.

YIRIWAN A.T.C. (v/o)

We are familiar with matter teleportation technology, Delta Flyer. That is of no use here.

F/X â€" Close orbit of Yiriwa Prime

The DELTA FLYER enters the planetary atmosphere.

F/X â€" Flat and rocky desert planet

The DELTA FLYER shoots overhead through a cloudless sky. The camera follows behind it.

INT. COCKPIT

MOGASU

Um, Captain?

JANEWAY looks up from her console.

JANEWAY

Yes, Ensign?

MOGASU

Captain, the course supplied by the planetary traffic control leads right for a mountain range, and at too low an altitude to clear the peaks.

JANEWAY starts in surprise and looks at SEVEN. SEVEN checks her instruments.

SEVEN

There are extensive iron and lead deposits within the mountain range, Captain. I can get no reliable sensor readings.

F/X â€" View from Cockpit window

A very large mountain range is looming ahead.

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY smiles slightly.

JANEWAY

I think I know what is happening. Hold your heading, Ensign.

F/X â€" Arid and mountainous terrain

The DELTA FLYER glides in, circling a few mountains before slowing right down and heading for a steep cliff-face. At the very last moment, a rectangular area of rock slides downwards, revealing a metallic hatchway, which folds upwards.

The DELTA FLYER enters the bay, which is large enough to contain the VOYAGER.

F/X â€" Hidden landing bay

The DELTA FLYER touches down. Immediately, the landing pad begins to sink downwards.

INT. COCKPIT

SEVEN raises an eyebrow.

SEVEN

The Yiriwans are obviously subsurface dwelling. This is an

interesting evolutionary track for a space-going species. [Checks console] We are already over 100 metres below mean sea level.

CAREY

[Looks around unhappily] It makes me nervous. What happens if we need to get out in a hurry?

JANEWAY

[Smiles] You're not a fan of spelunking, Mr Carey?

CAREY

No, Ma'am. I am a true surface dweller to the core.

There is a perceptible bump as the lift stops moving.

F/X " HANGER CAVERN

The DELTA FLYER rolls out of the lift on an anti-gravity platform. The platform transports the ship to an empty space in a rack of three-winged shuttlecraft.

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY is sorting out her PADDs. She turns to NEELIX.

NEELIX

One last point, Captain. The Yiriwans put a great score by strength. When talking to them, be arrogant and self-assured. It will help them believe in the merits of your position if you seem sure of them yourself.

JANEWAY

I'll bear that in mind, Neelix. [Turns to crew] Seven, you're with me. Mr. Carey, you are in charge until I return. No-one gets on this ship without my say-so.

CAREY

Understood, Captain.

MOGASU

Good luck, Captain.

JANEWAY

Thanks, Ensign.

INT. YIRIWAN CITY CORRIDOR

JANEWAY and SEVEN walk down a corridor away from an airlock. They are met by two YIRIWANS wearing colourful ankle-length robes. The YIRIWANS have two arms with clawed hands and stand on triple-jointed legs.

JON-GLOR

[Bows] Captain Janeway, I am Negotiator Jon-Glor. Welcome to Underhill City. [Gestures to the other YIRIWAN] I present Attack Secretary Zev-Emmen

JANEWAY

[Bows in return] You do me honour with your welcome, Negotiator. I present my subordinate, Seven of Nine.

SEVEN bristles slightly at the description, but manages a courteous bow.

JON-GLOR gestures down the corridor. The four set off at a leisurely pace.

JON-GLOR

I must say I am very impressed with your technology, Captain. The people of Yiriwa are quite intrigued with the arrival of the representatives of such an advanced culture.

JANEWAY

I am sure that you will appreciate that reaching an agreement with us is in your best interests.

JON-GLOR

Indeed. Yet you come in a small and lightly-armed space vessel.

JANEWAY smiles toothily.

JANEWAY

Our culture sends the ship best suited for any mission, Negotiator. We have larger ships; we just don't use them in such a role.

JON-GLOR makes the strange scratching noise of Yiriwan laughter.

JON-GLOR

I see you have thought to learn our ways, Captain. You clearly believe in your assignment.

ZEV-EMMEN

If your culture is so powerful, Captain, why do you come to us, kneeling in supplication, pleading for our help?

JANEWAY stops immediately.

JANEWAY

I do not 'plead' Attack Secretary. I bring a warning for the wise.

However, if I am in the presence of foolsâ€|

JANEWAY makes as if to walk away. JON-GLOR snarls something untranslatable to ZEV-EMMEN, then reaches out to stop JANEWAY.

JON-GLOR

No, stay, bold Captain. We will hear your case.

JANEWAY pauses as if reluctant. Then finally nods in agreement. As they walk behind their hosts, JANEWAY turns to SEVEN and makes a show of mopping her brow.

INT â€" YIRIWAN CITY, OPEN SQUARE

JANEWAY stands on a balcony, looking out at the towering conical buildings surrounding an open area with trees and water. The lights are very bright. JANEWAY is noticeably sweating.

JON-GLOR

As a reptilian species, we Yiriwans enjoy nothing more than a cooling drink followed by a long, restful bask under a hot sun. I imagine that this is uncomfortable for you mammals.

JANEWAY

I have endured heat that even your people would find oppressive, Jon-Glor.

JON-GLOR laughs again. ZEV-EMMEN offers SEVEN a glass of (probably) fruit juice. She tastes it and reacts with pleased surprise.

ZEV-EMMEN

I still do not comprehend why you are in a smaller vessel so far from a mother ship.

JANEWAY pauses thoughtfully, then decides to tell the truth.

JANEWAY

You know that we are here to bring you all a warning about a terrible new enemy that threatens all species. Our last sight of our mother ship was it locked in a struggle against the forces of this enemy.

ZEV-EMMEN

[Leans forward, is interested] Was it destroyed?

JANEWAY

We do not know. Ignorance is truly the worst of all tortures.

JON-GLOR nods thoughtfully and gestures to the table. Platters of

fruit and glasses of water are already laid out.

JON-GLOR

We will hear this entire story and hear your petition, Katherine Janeway.

FADE

ACT 2

INT " YIRIWAN CITY

JANEWAY stands at the balcony, watching the activity in the open space hawkishly. Her expression is unreadable.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's Log, Supplemental. After several hours of explanations and discussions, our Yiriwan hosts have left to meet with the council of their people. I can only hope that I have done my job and convinced the Yiriwans of the terrible necessity of fighting the Destroyers.

SEVEN (Out of shot)

Captain, our hosts are returning.

JANEWAY looks around to see JON-GLOR accompanied by two YIRIWAN GUARDS, wearing what looks like leather armour and carrying lethal-looking pikes.

JON-GLOR

Captain Katherine Janeway. Our council wishes to question you. You will come with me.

JANEWAY

My subordinate and I will attend the Council.

JON-GLOR's eyes track to SEVEN. He hisses and shows his teeth.

JON-GLOR

She will remain here.

JANEWAY

[Firm] She will attend.

JON-GLOR bobs his head.

JON-GLOR

As you wish. It will make no difference.

INT. YIRIWAN COUCIL CHAMBER

Several robed YIRIWANS sit in cup-shaped nests. A bright light falls on the very centre of the room. JANEWAY and SEVEN enter and stand in the bright light. JON-GLOR walks in and takes a position between them and the Councillors. He stands at the very fringe of the spotlight.

ZEV-EMMEN [One of the Councillors]

We commanded only the attendance of the Captain!

JON-GLOR

She stated that her subordinate would attend. Her inflexibility speaks well of her cause.

The CHIEF COUNCILLOR interrupts ZEV-EMMEN before he can speak again.

CHIEF COUNCILLOR

We have heard our Negotiator's testimony, Katherine Janeway. We have heard the opinion of our Attack Secretary. We have even given attention to the records you provided us. However, we would hear your own words.

JANEWAY stands still, waiting for the first question.

CHIEF COUNCILLOR

I am curious, why does such a powerful culture need the help of the humble people of Yiriwa?

JANEWAY

Powerful we are, oh honoured one. Yet even our power is as nothing compared to The Destroyers. They are primal chaos given shape and form. They have laid waste to whole systems and we are here to sound the warning before they come here too. Only acting decisively and as one can the peoples of the galaxy hope to remain free.

ZEV-EMMEN

[Sneering tone] What did I tell you? They are weak.

CHIEF COUNCILLOR

These 'Destroyers, ' Katherine Janeway, they have not threatened us. Why should we concern ourselves with your struggle with them?

JANEWAY draws in a breath.

JANEWAY

All species are their enemy, honoured one. In time, they will come intending to conquer or to destroy.

ZEV-EMMEN

As they have destroyed your ship?

JANEWAY visibly winces at the mention of the VOYAGER.

JANEWAY

One vessel is as nothing in the face of such a dark advent. No one race can hope to survive alone. Only by uniting your strength with our knowledge of the enemy and their technology can we hope to prevail. Attack Secretary, I hope and believe that my ship has survived. Martial prudence demands that I be ready for the worstâ€¦

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD

Several moon-sized asteroids drift through the shot. Suddenly, with their characteristic shriek, four Destroyer DART-class fighters shoot past, surrounding a pair of DEVASTATOR-class bombers. The DEVASTATORS have two hulls with three spines to either side at their base. Three forward-facing 'fangs' surround the prow of the starboard hull, while the port hull ends with spheroid cap with three launch tubes cut into its structure.

We follow the DARTS and the DEVASTATORS towards one asteroid. They begin to hug the surface at medium altitude and slow down. The DEVASTATORS begin to fire bombs that drop vertically away and detonate, illuminating the entire visible area.

Our POV slowly pans away from the bombing run to a deep crater. A familiar shape sits in the gloom, hidden from direct sight. As our POV zooms in, we realise that it is the VOYAGER. Someone has roughly patched the breach in the starboard side of the secondary hull and the starboard nacelle is a mess.

As we get closer, we see minimum-power blue lights shining in the interior.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

Ship's Log, stardate: 93965.0. Acting Captain Chakotay recording. It has been over a standard month since the Voyager fought and destroyed two Destroyer warships. It was not a victory without price. Nineteen crewmembers, irreplaceable men and women, were killed in that battle.

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

CHAKOTAY is pacing in the dimly lit room, reading a PADD. Although the area is tidy, carbonisation scars of the back wall and the absence of many of JANEWAY's keepsakes indicates that the room took a pounding during the battle.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

After a long period of desperate repairs, the ship is largely secure. All life support systems are functioning on auxiliary power. We have restored basic sensor and defensive capabilities. The ship's hull, seriously compromised during the struggle, is secure again. [Sigh] However, with the destruction of the warp core, the ship has permanently lost main power and warp-speed capabilities.

INT. ENGINEERING

TORRES is reading a PADD and snapping instructions to her crew. The WARP CORE is conspicuous by its absence. TORRES looks harried and frustrated.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

In our current state, the Voyager is unable to fight effectively or run for neutral space. Crew morale is rock bottom and everyone is beginning to come down with serious cases of cabin fever. More importantly, Destroyer forces are systematically bombarding all the asteroids near the battle site in a hope of flushing us out. Unless we come up with an innovative strategy soon, it is only a matter of time before the ship is detected [Beat] and destroyed. I am sorry I wasn't able to complete my assignment, Katherine.

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

CHAKOTAY is sitting at the desk, poring over various reports. The DOOR CHIME bleeps.

CHAKOTAY

[Distracted] Come.

PARIS enters.

CHAKOTAY

Yes Tom?

PARIS

The Destroyer bombers are pulling out, Commander. B'Elanna just wanted you to know that she is now on the last of the external welding.

CHAKOTAY nods thoughtfully.

CHAKOTAY

Have you given any more thought to my suggestion, Tom?

PARIS shakes his head in a dispirited fashion.

PARIS

I've gone over it every way I can think of, Sir. There is simply no way we can get out past the level of Destroyer forces in this system without attracting unwelcome attention. [Slightly forced grin] Something tells me that the Destroyers won't be interested in giving us a good citizenship award.

CHAKOTAY manages a hollow laugh. He stands, walks to the window and looks at the 'view' of the asteroid outside the window. PARIS Sighs slightly and rubs his shoulder.

PARIS

Your 'passive drift' idea is a good one, but there is no way we can coast through this asteroid field without some engine activity.

CHAKOTAY

Still, we can't just sit here and wait to be blown up by a Destroyer bomber getting lucky. [Pauses, then decisively] Once B'Elanna has finished the last of the welding on the outer hull, I want to have a full senior staff meeting. It's time for us to decide what we are going to do next.

PARIS nods and exits. CHAKOTAY leans against the window for a while, then pushes himself straight and looks out at the stars.

CHAKOTAY

[Firm] I'm not ready to die yet, my friends. Not yet and not so easily.

INT. YIRIWAN CITY, OPEN AREA

JANEWAY and SEVEN are standing together. JANEWAY is sipping one of the ubiquitous fruit juices while SEVEN paces nervously. JON-GLOR enters from the rear archway.

JON-GLOR

My friends, the Council has come to a decision.

JANEWAY looks around and looks the Yirawan negotiator in the eye.

JANEWAY

[Firm] Well?

JON-GLOR

While the Council thanks you for your warning of the activities of these 'Destroyers,' they have ruled that they cannot assist you at this time. A culture must stand or fall on their own strengths and weaknesses. We cannot interfere with this natural process. [Regretfully] Therefore the council rules that you must be on your way.

JANEWAY draws in a deep breath and grimaces. SEVEN is about to comment, but JANEWAY touches her shoulder, instructing her to remain silent.

JANEWAY

At least your people have listened to our warning, Negotiator Jon-Glor. We will leave immediately. I sincerely hope that your people will not regret this decision.

JANEWAY turns to leave, but JON-GLOR steps forward.

JON-GLOR

I believe, Captain. If you can bring the Council proof of an immediate need, then I will support your petition for action.

SEVEN

We have provided all the proof available, Negotiator. The Destroyers will do the rest.

JON-GLOR

[Cautious] Is that a threat, Seven of Nine?

SEVEN

No. It is a statement of fact.

JANEWAY and SEVEN exit. They leave JON-GLOR standing alone on the balcony.

F/X " SPACE NEAR YIRIWA PRIME

The Delta Flyer shoots past. Our POV turns to follow as it leaps to warp speed.

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY is typing up her notes on a PADD.

NEELIX

So you don't think that this was a total loss, Captain?

JANEWAY

No, Mr. Neelix. Our presentation impressed the Yiriwans, but their laws have hamstrung us. [Sighs] How ironic that an equivalent of the Prime Directive is an obstacle. No, Jon-Glor was right. We have to provide them with proof of an immediate need to act.

SEVEN

What do you propose, Captain?

JANEWAY

[Thoughtful] I'm not sure, Seven. Perhaps I'll think of something on our way to our next appointment.

MOGASU

E.T.A. at the A'tel System is Fourteen hours six minutes, Ma'am.

JANEWAY rises and stretches.

JANEWAY

I think I'll take this opportunity to rest. Notify me if anything happens, Ensign.

MOGASU

Yes Ma'am.

The DELTA FLYER shoots past and into the distance.

FADE

ACT 3

F/X " THE VOYAGER HIDDEN IN A DEEP CRATER

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

CHAKOTAY sits at the head of the table. To his left sit TUVOK and the DOCTOR. To his right sit PARIS, TORRES and KIM. TORRES is still wearing her pressure suit (sans helmet). She is obviously exhausted. Despair is etched on every face except TUVOK's. CHAKOTAY is obviously concluding his remarks.

CHAKOTAY

So, that is the situation. If you ignore the loss of warp speed, the _Voyager_ is nearly back to full capability. Now we have to decide our next move.

TUVOK

[Thoughtful] I believe, Commander, that the appropriate question is: 'Is there a next move?' We appear to have been checkmated.

CHAKOTAY

I'm not willing to accept that, Mr. Tuvok. I want to have some suggestions, people, no matter how nonsensical it seems.

There is a pause, as everyone thinks hard.

KIM

There has been a lot of activity by what may be Destroyer merchant shipping in the system over the last few hours. Perhaps we could 'piggy-back' our way out of the system?

TUVOK

'Piggy-back?'

CHAKOTAY smiles grimly.

CHAKOTAY

That's a human term, Tuvok. It means to use another as a source of movement while remaining passive.

PARIS

[Slight smile] Well done, Commander. That's the best description I've ever heard.

TORRES manages a small smile of her own before sitting up.

TORRES

I don't think it will work, Harry. If we were on the Liberty, we might get away with it, but the Voyager is too big an object for even a casual scan to miss.

TUVOK

Lieutenant Torres is correct, Commander. [Leans forward and steeples his fingers] I do not suggest this lightly, but in its' current condition the Voyager is more of a liability than an asset.

CHAKOTAY

[Neutral] Do you have a suggestion, Mr. Tuvok?

TUVOK

I do, Commander.

TUVOK walks to the viewscreen and activates it. An OKUDAGRAM appears of a standard SHUTTLECRAFT above a cluster of five escape pods docked in a 'Maltese Cross' formation. A wavy energy beam' graphic emerges from the base of the shuttle and surrounds the pods.

TUVOK

As Lieutenant Torres states, it is impossible to covertly move a vessel the size of the Voyager through the Destroyer lines. However, using this scheme, a shuttlecraft can tow a group of escape pods out of the asteroid belt and to safety at high impulse speeds.

TUVOK presses a control to change the display. We now have a map of the Adronai asteroid field with several routes highlighted.

TUVOK

These courses are based on a mathematical extrapolation of the patrol routes of the Destroyer forces. I have designed these routes to avoid close-range detection. The formation I recommend would have a sufficiently high volume-to-density ratio to avoid longer-range scans. Once we are clear of the asteroid field, the shuttles would rendezvous at one place and form a sphere around the escape pods, allowing us to move at warp speed for the nearest neutral planet. Once there, we will await pick-up by friendly forces.

PARIS

'Friendly forces?' What friendly forces? We are 50,000 light years

from the Federation.

TUVOK

Captain Janeway left the ship seeking allies. We should show faith in her abilities and be in a place where she can find us.

TORRES

[Grim and quiet] You are assuming that the Delta Flyer escaped those two fighters. The chances were not good.

KIM

[Aghast] Are you suggesting that we abandon the Voyager?

TUVOK

Not easily, Lieutenant. However I do not believe we have any other logical choice.

TORRES straightens up and is about to explode when PARIS comments.

PARIS

Tuvok, that is suicide. If we try to get out of here in escape pods and shuttles, we will be presenting the Destroyers with free target practice!

TUVOK looks levelly at PARIS

TUVOK

There is a marked probability that the Destroyers will detect and destroy a maximum of three of the proposed twelve formations. However, this will still allow the majority of the crew to escape. Logic dictates thatâ€¦

TORRES

Logic! [Scornful laugh] You are proposing that we run like cowards and hope that our new 'masters' don't feel like destroying us for fun! Forget it, Tuvok. I'd rather go down fighting and free, even if it's hopeless!

TUVOK

[Dry] I am not proposing capitulation, Lieutenant. Logic dictates that we must act to ensure our long-term survival, not succumb to a short-term and hysterical desire to demonstrate courage in the face of impossible odds. [Voice becomes scornful] History does not record the courage of those who died uselessly and alone.

There is an ugly pause. TORRES slowly gets to her feet and stares right at TUVOK, her impressively bumpy head lowered like a charging bull.

TORRES

[Dangerously quiet] What are you implying here, Tuvok?

PARIS puts a restraining hand on TORRES' shoulder while KIM and the DOCTOR get out of the way.

DOCTOR

Oh myâ€¦

KIM

Whoa! Ease down you two. B'Elanna, you can't be serious!

CHAKOTAY

[Shouts] Alright, people! Hold it right there!

There is a long pause, then TORRES sits down and TUVOK visibly relaxes and puts his hands flat on the table.

CHAKOTAY

At this rate, the Destroyers won't have to try to kill us. We'll save them the trouble by tearing our own throats out. Torres, you were way out of line there.

TORRES scowls.

CHAKOTAY

As for you, Tuvok, there was no cause for you to imply anything about the quality of Lieutenant Torres' professionalism or courage.

TUVOK raises an eyebrow.

CHAKOTAY

Now I am not going to allow this, people. We are not going to give in to our frustrations and start tearing into each other. Because we will end up right where we started, with our backs to the wall and trying to get out of this death trap alive. Now I want you both to cool off.

CHAKOTAY looks around the table, especially noting the embarrassed look on TORRES' face and TUVOK's utterly closed expression.

CHAKOTAY

[Quieter and calmer] Tuvok, your suggestion is noted, but I am not going to risk this crew in a plan where the odds are stacked so steeply against survival. We get out together or not at all. Now, let's hear those suggestions.

DOCTOR

Perhaps this is not my field, Commander, but it seems to me that our biggest problem is the loss of the warp core. Without it we cannot use warp speed and we cannot develop the full power of our tactical

systems.

CHAKOTAY

That's broadly the situation, Doctor. What are you suggesting?

DOCTOR

It is similar to the situation to a patient who has lost or suffered severe damage to a vital organ. I would consider giving a patient a replacement organ for the one lost.

TORRES

[Sarcastic] I don't see any signs around here marked 'used warp cores for sale.'

KIM

[Excited] No, but there must be something in this area.

TORRES

[Quiet and nonplussed] Oh. I guess I should start looking for signs thenâ€¦

KIM

[Continues as if TORRES had not spoken] I mean, there must be thousands of power cores from Adronai ships in this asteroid field. Even if none are individually functional, we may be able to jerry-rig a replacement core from parts we can salvage.

CHAKOTAY

A good suggestion, Mr. Kim, but we don't have the survey capability to search the field as matters stand.

PARIS

Yes we do. Commander, B'Elanna and I have discussed converting our Mark Nine shuttles to act as fighter ships. They are small, manoeuvrable and can defend themselves. They are perfect for this.

CHAKOTAY

[Hopeful] How long?

TORRES

Two hours per shuttle to convert them to fighter configuration.

PARIS

Then a standard survey. Say about thirty-six hours?

CHAKOTAY

Do it. Get as many hands as you require. Dismissed.

All the crew race out in excitement except TUVOK. He sits for a moment, then turns to CHAKOTAY.

TUVOK

I am not confident in the chances for the success of this plan.

CHAKOTAY

We cannot give up, Tuvok. We must take every step necessary to keep up the fight.

TUVOK

Nonetheless, this is most illogical.

CHAKOTAY

[Rueful] I think this is one of those cases that goes beyond logic, Tuvok.

TUVOK

[Cold] Nothing goes beyond logic, Commander. I trust we will not come to regret not leaving while the Destroyer presence in this sector is still light.

CHAKOTAY

[Quiet and mild] Dismissed, Commander.

INT. BRIDGE " SOME TIME LATER

CHAKOTAY is sitting in his chair (how odd that he never sits in JANEWAY's chair). KIM, TUVOK and PARIS are at their stations. WILDMAN is at science.

WILDMAN's console begins to bleep wildly.

WILDMAN

Commander! Our perimeter warning probes have detected several Destroyer ships heading our way!

There is a moment of nervousness before CHAKOTAY walks over to WILDMAN with a slow measured pace.

CHAKOTAY

Can you make an identification, Lieutenant?

WILDMAN works her console.

WILDMAN

A scout and two fighters sir. [Presses a few switches] They don't seem to have detected us sir. The scout is scanning for ores like that last one.

KIM

[Pessimistic] Even so, it is more than enough to finish us in our current state.

CHAKOTAY looks up thoughtfully, then smiles broadly.

CHAKOTAY

Oh no, Harry. That scout is going to save us a lot of trouble. Bridge to Shuttle Bay. B'Elanna, what's your status?

TORRES (v/o)

We've finished the conversions on the _Cochrane II_ and the _Lindbergh_, Commander.

CHAKOTAY virtually beams

CHAKOTAY

Alright, B'Elanna, assign your teams to convert the weapons of the Captain's Yacht to the new standards.

By now, the Bridge Crew are all looking at CHAKOTAY in surprise. He is smiling broadly as if he has had some very good news. He sits back in his seat and examines the central console for a moment before he speaks again, still in very good humour.

CHAKOTAY

Mr. Tuvok, have a full assault team report to the Captain's Yacht. Mr. Paris, I want the _Cochrane_ and the _Lindbergh_ ready for launch.

TUVOK

Do you have a particular plan in mind, Commander?

CHAKOTAY

Indeed I do, Mr. Tuvok. [Rubs hands] I feel like determining the place and time of the battle today.

FADE

ACT 3

F/X " DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER shoots past at impulse speed. POV tracks to follow it towards a beautiful blue-white world.

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY, MOGASU, NEELIX, SEVEN and CAREY are all at their respective

stations.

MOGASU

E.T.A. at A'tel IV is four minutes, Captain.

JANEWAY

Thank you, Mr. Mogasu. You were saying, Neelix?

NEELIX

Well, the people of A'tel IV, the Telay, are far more peaceful than the Yiriwans. Although their culture is based on philosophy and art, they are formidable fighters when roused. The Yiriwans call them 'The Artists with Fangs.' Learn what you will from that.

JANEWAY smiles slightly.

JANEWAY

The question is, will we be able to convince them?

NEELIX

[Reading from PADD] It is far more likely than with the Yiriwans, Captain. The Telay are the driving force behind the alliance in this area of space. They are a far more intellectual people and they have a reputation of visionary thinking.

SEVEN

[Cynical] It remains to be seen if this reputation is justified.
[Console bleeps] We have been contacted by the Space Traffic Controllers on A'tel IV. [Beat] They have given us docking permission for their primary orbital space facility.

JANEWAY

Mr. Mogasu, take us in.

F/X " A'TEL IV

The DELTA FLYER cruises past. Our POV rotates to follow the ship as it cruises past the blue-white planetscape. As the view rotates, a large, graceful-looking space station comes into view. From the bottom of the station, a thin tether extends towards the planet.

F/X " VIEW FROM COCKPIT

The STATION, which resembles a cross between a giant jellyfish and a Water Lilly flower, grows in the forward viewport.

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY

[Breathless] Oh, it's beautiful.

SEVEN

[Brow raised] Our scans indicate that the station is constructed from organic matter and crystalline ores. As well as lending the design great tensile strength, I admit the result isâ€¦ aesthetically pleasant.

JANEWAY smiles mischievously at SEVEN's admission.

F/X â€" A'TEL IV TETHERED SPACE PLATFORM

As the DELTA FLYER slowly approaches one of the petal-like extensions of the space station, the edge of the hull folds open, revealing a well-lit docking area. There are several spacecraft already docked including some Yiriwan shuttlecraft and graceful squid-shaped crystalline shuttlecraft (probably Telay ships).

F/X â€" DOCKING BAY

The hull folds closed behind the DELTA FLYER. The super-shuttlecraft manoeuvres for a moment before docking in a free slip. An organic tube extends forward and attaches itself to the side of the spacecraft.

INT. MAIN CABIN

JANEWAY and NEELIX are preparing to depart. NEELIX is concluding his briefing

NEELIX

The really odd thing about the Telay is their abundant psychic abilities. While many races have some psi talents, the Telay are unique in this part of the galaxy. Every individual Telay enjoys the entire range of telepathic and telekinetic abilities.

SEVEN reacts to this revelation and turns to a replicator.

SEVEN

[Concerned] The Borg have assimilated psi shielding technology, Captain. I will install one in the Delta Flyer's shield generators. If you will delay your departure, I will replicate portable units for you and Mr. Neelix.

JANEWAY

No need, Seven. We have to demonstrate trust if we are to convince the Telay. This is a good place to start.

SEVEN

[Sceptical] If you are sure, Captain.

JANEWAY

[Firm] Quite sure, Seven.

INT. AIRLOCK CORRIDOR

The corridor is basically square, but there are no sharp edges. As JANEWAY and NEELIX exit the DELTA FLYER, the shuttle's airlock closes, then the end of the corridor irises closed. NEELIX jumps in surprise at the quiet closure.

JANEWAY strikes out down the corridor. This time NEELIX barely reacts as the inner airlock irises open to allow them into the space station.

INT. TELAY SPACE PLATFORM, CORRIDOR

JANEWAY enters the corridor and looks around. A few exotic aliens walk past on their way to somewhere.

NEELIX

Those are Chalik, the newest members of the alliance.

JANEWAY nods. Suddenly, there is a wash of WHITE NOISE. JANEWAY frowns and touches her temples.

VOICE (Ethereal)

Welcome to Serenity High Station, Katherine Marie Janeway.

JANEWAY frown and looks around. A TELAY male in sweeping, graceful white robes stands a few metres away. He is approximately seven feet tall, incredibly thin and has no visible hair. His green eyes are widely spaced either side of a nose-less nasal opening. Although he has a mouth, it does not move as he speaks.

VOICE (Ethereal)

I am Yeton, and I speak for my people.

JANEWAY is flabbergasted, realising that this is true mind-to-mind telepathy. It is something she has not experienced before. She recovers her composure after a moment.

JANEWAY

Greetings Yeton, this is Neelix of Talaxia, one of my crew.

YETON smiles. When he replies, his mouth does not move.

YETON (Ethereal)

Hello, Neelix. [Laughter] No, my people do not ever speak aloud. We evolved telepathy early in our history and have never required vocal chords.

JANEWAY

[Slightly annoyed] In my culture, we consider it bad manners to read someone's thoughts without permission.

YETON (Ethereal)

In my culture, it is so common it we see it as the same as reading the tone of one's voice or even interpreting body language.

JANEWAY shakes her head with a wry smile. She gathers her thoughts and opens her mouth to speak. YETON interrupts before she even has a chance to draw a breath.

YETON (Ethereal)

I agree, Captain. It is best if we get directly to business, please follow me.

YETON moves off. There is something about his walk, as if his legs are not really providing any locomotion, but are just flapping to give the impression of walking. JANEWAY shrugs and gestures to NEELIX to follow.

The strange trio walks through the corridors of the station. They occasionally pass an area where the corridor has a balcony overlooking other corridors or what may be commercial areas. Several races walk past including more Chalik, some Yiriwans and many TELAY.

The other TELAY do not walk. They float several inches above the ground.

YETON (Ethereal)

Yes, Captain. I am only simulating 'walking' for your ease of mind. The Telay have not used mundane physical locomotive methods for centuries now.

JANEWAY

Please don't go out of your way for our benefit, Speaker Yeton.

YETON (Ethereal)

[Laughs] Oh it's no trouble. Actually, I like it. It gives movement such a wonderfully visceral feel. I think that is one of the reasons why I have progressed so far in the Diplomatic Corps.

The three enter a turbolift.

INT. TURBOLIFIT

The doors close and YETON moves a hand over a blank panel, which flashes with a pattern of lights.

Once again, YETON replies to an unspoken question.

YETON (Ethereal)

Yes, Neelix, we use a direct mind-to-machine interface. Most species use control interfaces that involve their most accurate means of controlling their environment, which means hand-manipulated controls. The minds of the Telay require no brute physical appendages to control their environment, so it is inevitable that we would develop machines that would respond to the call of our minds.

JANEWAY

[Cautious] Tell me, Yeton. Do you regard your people as superior to ours?

YETON (Ethereal)

Not superior, Captain, but simply different. An accident of evolution has bestowed psychic abilities upon us and we use them. The level of technology culture has proves my point. The relative level of development of the psychic lobe in no way affects the development of the mind as a whole.

JANEWAY nods thoughtfully.

The lift doors open. YETON escorts JANWAY and NEELIX out of the lift.

INT. SPACE PLATFORM CORRIDOR

The three walk a short way down a corridor to a patch of wall that irises open at their approach.

YETON (Ethereal)

The meeting room. Please sit down.

INT. MEETING ROOM

The room is rectangular and an oval table dominates it. An oval viewscreen fills one of the shorter walls. A selection of fruits and a pitcher of water with crystal glasses sit in the centre of the table.

YETON (Ethereal)

Now, Captain, I understand that you have come all this way to deliver a warning to my humble people. A warning of a terrible new threat in our poor galaxy, as if such menaces as the Hirogen and the Borg was not enough.

JANEWAY

That is correct. This new race, who we only know as 'The Destroyers' are extra-galactic in origin. They appear to be determined to conquer our galaxy and enslave every living being here.

YETON (Ethereal)

[Grim] We Telay have been at peace for nearly five decades Captain, and we value this peace. Nonetheless, I can feel the urgency of this threat although I have not directly read your thoughts.

NEELIX reaches forward for one of the fruits and tries a small purple berry. He grimaces and flushes it down with some water.

YETON (Ethereal)

[Laughs] Yes, Neelix, Copoberry is very sour. It is rather an acquired taste. [Beat] I agree, an Earth Strawberry does taste far

better, I hope to taste one for real one day.

JANEWAY is thinking hard during this interruption. When she speaks, she sounds frightened, but determined.

JANEWAY

Yeton, if I gave my permission, could you read my mind and see the entire war so far as I have seen it?

YETON (Ethereal)

[Serious] Yes, Captain. You must realise, however, that such a link is a very intimate process. You would not be able to hide any thought from me, no matter how personal or private it is.

JANEWAY manages a shaky smile. She gestures to silence NEELIX before he can express his misgivings. JANEWAY straightens and draws in a deep breath.

JANEWAY

Nevertheless, the need for such clear communication is great indeed, Yeton. We must have an understanding on this and I can think of no better way. You have my permission to proceed.

YETON (Ethereal)

Very well then. The process is instantaneous and painless, but I will need a moment to make a connection. Please relax.

JANEWAY closes her eyes and YETON looks in her direction. There is a hint of a blue glow in the TELAY's green eyes. After a long moment, JANEWAY opens her eyes. She gasps at the sensations she has just experienced. To her surprise, YETON is crying.

YETON (Ethereal)

[Quiet] You have enjoyed such an amazing life with such dramatic experiences. I feel your pain for your lost crew, Captain. I, too, hope that such brave and unique beings have somehow survived that terrible battle. [Firm] Of course, you have the aid of my people in your struggle. It is quite clear that it either we fight or we spend an eternity in slavery.

JANEWAY

[Amazed] Shouldn't you consult your leaders first?

YETON (Ethereal)

[Amused] They have been listening in from the moment I first saw you, Katherine.

JANEWAY blushes for some reason.

JANEWAY

You mean that all your leaders haveâ€¦

YETON (Ethereal)

[Laughs] No, no. I only relayed the memories relevant to this discussion. We do have some ethics regarding telepathy you know.

INT. AIRLOCK CORRIDOR

JANEWAY and NEELIX walk down the corridor. JANEWAY looks upbeat and hopeful. YETON pauses at the inner door. Another TELAY appears and hands him two cases. He then proceeds down the corridor.

JANEWAY

I'm sorry, Yeton, is there something else?

YETON (Ethereal)

Why yes, Captain. I am coming with you. My leaders have assigned me the task of ensuring the other members of our alliance listen when you speak.

JANEWAY

This is an unexpected honour and a great help. Thank you.

YETON seems to swell slightly at the praise and gestures grandly to the DELTA FLYER's airlock.

YETON (Ethereal)

Indeed. Shall we proceed?

FADE

ACT 4

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

With the usual unearthly screech, a CHIMERA scout and two DART fighters swoop overhead and loop slowly past asteroids on their survey of the remains of the Adronai System.

CUT TO " SMALLISH ASTEROID

In a shadow, the Captain's Yacht Erhart and the Type-9 shuttles Cochrane II and Lindbergh wait in an inverted 'vee' formation. Their running lights are all off. The shadows deepen as the Destroyer ships swing overhead

INT. ERHART COCKPIT

CHAKOTAY sits behind two ENSIGNS at the Conn and Ops stations in the small cockpit area. TORRES stands at his side. All are wearing full tactical armour, sans helmets. CHAKOTAY is staring out of the windows.

CHAKOTAY

[Tense] Here they come, right on schedule.

INT. ERHART MAIN COMPARTMENT

Twenty Starfleet junior officers and ratings sit on two facing benches. They are wearing full armour and carrying Phaser IIIA assault rifles with under-slung nadion grenade launchers.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

Marines stand by.

INT. ERHART COCKPIT

TORRES

I don't like this, Chakotay. They could detect us any second.

CHAKOTAY

They won't get a chance. [Taps a control on a console by his chair] Fighters, commence your attack.

INT. COCHRANE II COCKPIT

PARIS sits in the cramped cockpit, surrounded by control consoles. He is wearing a pressure suit with its visor raised. (You didn't know they had moving visors, did you? Well I'm writing this and I say they do!) PARIS draws a breath and pulls down his visor.

PARIS

[Quiet] Here we go

F/X - ASTEROID FIELD

POV - Looking forward from behind the Erhart. There is a flare of red-orange from the impulse vents on the Cochrane II and the Lindbergh. The two Type-9 shuttles race forward.

F/X " VIEW FROM COCHRANE II COCKPIT WINDOW

Heads-up Display symbology fills our view, showing the shuttle's speed and galactic bearing. There is clear evidence that the shuttle is moving very fast. The CHIMERA quickly grows in the window. The HUD displays red ersatz-3D boxes around the Destroyer ships. A targeting 'flower' appears and tracks onto the nearest DART. The legend 'PHASER LOCK' flashes below the flower.

To the right, we see the Lindbergh fire a photon torpedo. The missile strikes the other DART, which tumbles out of formation and explodes.

Bright phaser pulses flash from four points along the bottom of our field of view, striking the remaining DART. The Destroyer fighter swings out to the right, but the phasers continue to track. Within a second, the Destroyer ship explodes.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The COCHRANE II barrel rolls through the explosion.

INT. COCKPIT

PARIS

[Yells] Yee-hoo!

F/X - ASTEROID FIELD

Both Type-9s loop away from the CHIMERA. The LINDBERGH crosses over the CHIMERA's nose and forms up with the COCHRANE II. The CHIMERA fires its pulse cannon, but none of the shots connect with the speedy fighters.

NEW POV - Looking away from the CHIMERA

The two fighters form up side-by-side and accelerate towards the camera.

F/X " VIEW FROM COCHRANE II COCKPIT WINDOW

The HUD paints an orange oval around the CHIMERA. A white sniper sight appears at the centre of the oval. The oval moves a short amount back along the CHIMERA's line of motion. The oval moves back to circle the CHIMERA, moving the white sight forward a small amount. In the background we hear a regular 'beep-beep-beep' sound.

PARIS (v/o)

That's it, baby. Come to papa.

The legend 'TORPEDO LOCK' flashes. The beeps turn to a continual tone.

F/X - ASTEROID FIELD

The COCHRANE II and the LINDBERGH simultaneously fire a photon torpedo at the CHIMERA. The two fighters break away from the Destroyer ship as more pulse cannon shots spit out at them.

New POV - Close by the nose of the CHIMERA

The forward pulse cannon in the 'fangs' fire just as the torpedoes detonate minutely short of the shields. The explosions illuminate the shields and the CHIMERA rocks slightly from the impact.

New POV - The other side of the CHIMERA, close to the hull

The ERHART, ignored in the heat of the sudden attack, is slowly backing up against the CHIMERA's hull. Four small and low-power docking tractor beams activate and we briefly see a sparkle of golden light from a phaser torch cutting through the hull before the docking port attaches flush to the CHIMERA's hull.

INT. DESTROYER CHIMERA-CLASS SCOUT, HALLWAY

The corridor is an irregular trapezoid shape in dull greys with the occasional splash of green. Blue and white lights shine from behind

openings in the wall. Medium-strength yellow lights shine down from the upper corners of the wall. Trapezoid control panels with incomprehensible iconographs are spaced regularly along the wall.

There is a searing point of golden light high up on the wall. In a moment, the light cuts a circular incision into the wall. The panel falls out with a loud bang. An big armoured humanoid figure steps out carrying a huge Phaser Cannon IVP. The cannon fires a series of bright golden-white pulses.

New POV - Looking down the hall

Two DESTROYER crewmen are caught in the rapid phaser fire and go down in a shower of sparks, uttering metallic shrieks.

New POV - The hole in the wall

Three other MARINES barge out of the hole in the wall. A blue-white flash catches the first of this group and a massive explosion blows off his or her chest-plate. The other two turn and fire their phaser rifles. Another pulse hits the third MARINE, who is also comprehensively blown away. The second kneels and fires her rifle again.

New POV - Looking up the corridor

A phaser bolt hits a DESTROYER soldier in the throat; the creature goes down without a sound. Another leans out and is cut down by a rapid series of phaser pulses from the first boarder's phaser cannon.

New POV - The boarding party

The first big MARINE pulls out his tricorder and scans for a moment. We can now see through the faceplate. It is CHAKOTAY. The other one is TORRES. She leans down to examine the two fallen MARINES.

Other MARINES begin to boil out of the hull breach.

CHAKOTAY (Filtered)

Spread out and seal off this deck. Don't worry about taking prisoners. The Destroyers won't.

TORRES (Filtered)

We lost Williker and Zem.

CHAKOTAY (Filtered)

[Regretful] Alright, B'Elanna. [Firm] According to my scans, there is a lot of activity just a little way forward of this point. It may be a control area. Let's check it out.

CHAKOTAY holsters his tricorder and he and TORRES move off. In the background we can hear an unpleasant medley of phaser blasts, Destroyer disrupter blasts, and screams from both humanoid and Destroyer throats.

INT. CHIMERA ANTECHAMBER

CHAKOTAY and TORRES cautiously enter a large room, possibly some kind of antechamber, which is lit brightly from above. At the end of the room is a heavily armoured hexagonal door marked with red iconographs.

TORRES (Filtered)

What the hell is this place?

New POV - low shot towards CHAKOTAY and TORRES. The foot of a DESTROYER crewman drops into shot and quietly clicks against the deck.

CHAKOTAY suddenly swings around and fires his Phaser Cannon. The DESTROYER is blown back a good ten metres down the access corridor.

TORRES (Filtered)

Look out!

The door at the end of the room is open and a DESTROYER crewman stands, aiming his energy rifle. CHAKOTAY ducks, narrowly avoiding a blast from a Destroyer energy weapon. TORRES fires, stitching a series of phaser blasts across the DESTROYER's thorax armour. The creature shrieks and falls.

Another DESTROYER lunges forward from the doorway, knocking TORRES back. Her rifle clatters to the floor. CHAKOTAY shoots but misses and the DESTROYER grabs the barrel of the cannon, forcing it down. CHAKOTAY lets go and ducks backwards, avoiding a slash from the DESTROYER's fighting blade. The DESTROYER rears up and punches CHAKOTAY with its lower pair of arms, knocking him to the ground.

TORRES scrambles along the floor for her rifle. With a hiss, the DESTROYER turns to face her and swings its fighting blade downwards. TORRES draws her d'k tag knife, grabs one of the creature's lower arms and pulls herself up. She is very close and takes the opportunity to drive her knife into the DESTROYER's midsection. The alien squeals and collapses.

CHAKOTAY pulls himself to his feet.

CHAKOTAY (Filtered)

That was too close!

TORRES' breathing is fast and heavy. She shakes her head and manages a grin as she wipes the blade of her d'k tag and puts it in its sheath.

TORRES (Filtered)

[Ironic] Whatever does the job!

INT. CHIMERA CONTROL AREA

The control area is full of strange sights and strange angles. As quadrupeds, the Destroyers' chairs look more like stools than any other kind of chair. The stools have high skeletal-looking headrests with what may be either headphones or some kind of neural interface.

The controls are all arranged in trapezoid arrays. Any display screens are also trapezoid-shaped.

Instead of a viewscreen, the consoles are all on a platform in a spherical chamber with the entire 360-degree panorama of space projected all around them.

CHAKOTAY and TORRES walk up a steep ramp to get to the room from the antechamber.

CHAKOTAY (Filtered)

[Amazed] The bridge of a Destroyer spacecraft!

TORRES (Filtered)

[Cynical] Don't get too excited Chakotay.

CHAKOTAY (Filtered)

Enough banter, B'Elanna. Can you fly this thing?

TORRES is silent. She examines her tricorder for a moment before answering.

TORRES [Filtered]

I think so, Chakotay. I wouldn't like to try anything too ambitious, however.

MARINE (v/o and Filtered)

Prinze to Chakotay.

CHAKOTAY (Filtered)

Go ahead Ensign.

MARINE (v/o and filtered)

We have just taken what appears to be the engine room, Commander. Resistance has ceased.

CHAKOTAY shakes his fist in triumph.

CHAKOTAY (Filtered)

Damn good job. All surviving marines report back to the _Erhart_. Let's take this prize home.

F/X - ASTEROID FIELD

The ERHART swings around and heads off screen right. The CHIMERA starts to move in a jerky fashion, following the ERHART. The COCHRANE

II and the LINDBERGH form an escort.

FADE

ACT 5

F/X - DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER moves past at Warp Speed.

INT. MAIN CABIN

JANEWAY is reading a PADD and CAREY is resting on a bunk while YETON is, disturbingly, hovering above the centre of the chamber in a lotus position.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's Log, Stardate: 53968.1. The _Delta Flyer_ is on its way back to Yiriwa Prime at the conclusion of our successful negotiations with the Telay. It is my hope that we will be able to convene a full council of the fledgling alliance in this galactic sector as early as Stardate 53990 and begin co-ordinating military actions against the Destroyers.

JANEWAY sips her coffee and stands up with a stretch. CAREY stirs.

CAREY

[Uncertain] Captain?

JANEWAY

Yes Joe?

CAREY

I know this probably sounds stupid butâ€¦ Captain, do you really believe that the _Voyager_ survived that last battle?

JANEWAY draws in a breath.

JANEWAY

I don't know Joe. I know that Chakotay can fight his way out of many a tough corner, but against the Destroyers? [Trails off]

JANEWAY sits back down and holds her head in her hands.

JANEWAY

I just don't know. That is the worst part of this. Not knowing.

CAREY nods. He looks pensive. Surprisingly, he pulls out a PADD of his own from his duffel and activates it.

CLOSE UP - CAREY'S PADD

We see a series of photographs of Samantha WILDMAN, sometimes with CAREY, more often with NAOMI.

INT. MAIN CABIN

JANEWAY looks up and smiles slightly when she sees what CAREY is doing.

JANEWAY

May I see those?

CAREY nods and hands JANEWAY the PADD. JANEWAY quickly moves through the shots. She pauses at one in particular and smiles at what she sees.

JANEWAY

That is a lovely image of you, Samantha and Naomi. I don't think I've ever seen Samantha look soâ€¦| radiant.

CAREY smiles in an embarrassed fashion. JANEWAY hands the PADD back to him

CAREY

Commander Chakotay took that one at the Midsummer Holodeck Picnic. It was when Samantha and I decided to make a go at a relationship. [Sighs] God! [Shakes head] When I try to think about what could be happening, I feel like I'm going mad!

JANEWAY walks over to CAREY and rests her hand on her shoulder in a clumsy attempt at comfort.

JANEWAY

Joeâ€¦| [Suddenly makes her tone lighter] Joe, how did you and Samantha end up together? I mean, I thought you both had families back home?

CAREY smiles grimly.

CAREY

You forget that the operative word is 'had,' Captain. We were considered dead for those first four years. [Bitter] When we got those letters from home, I found that Claire, my wife, had given me up for dead. She had actually found someone else. [Hasty] I don't blame her, you understand. It still hurts, but I can't really say she was wrongâ€¦|

JANEWAY

[Grimly] I know the feeling.

CAREY looks at her in confusion. We know, but he doesn't, that she is talking about Mark.

CAREY

Anyway, at the same time Samantha found that her husband, Granktes, was killed in a battle in that war that is raging in the Alpha Quadrant. [Reflective] It's Naomi I feel sorry for. She didn't know what to think. She had never even known her pop, now he is dead. [More lightly] Anyway, our assignments coincided a few times over the next few weeks. Two lonely people got to know each other and [shrugs] the rest is history I guess.

JANEWAY smiles at that.

JANEWAY

That is one thing about the Voyager. A hundred and thirty people brought together by the most freakish of circumstances have become a crew and done things thatâ€¦ [Her smile becomes rueful] Well, let's say that they don't teach it this way in the academy. I think Jim Kirk would understand.

CAREY and JANEWAY laugh. JANEWAY grabs CAREY's arm again.

JANEWAY

I can't make any promises, Joe. But I swear that if it is in my power you will see Samantha and Naomi again.

CAREY smiles in thanks and leaves the MAIN CABIN, heading for the FLIGHT DECK. JANEWAY sits back down and sighs deeply. She folds her arms on the table and buries her face in them.

YETON (Ethereal)

Emotions are a strange thing, Captain.

JANEWAY looks up at the floating Telay ambassador with a grim smile.

JANEWAY

They are what make us vulnerable, but also what make us strong.

YETON (Ethereal)

They are what separate us from the enemy. Lieutenant Paris was right about that. [Pause] While Lieutenant Carey was talking about his lover, I noticed that you made the strangest association in your public mind.

JANEWAY

[Rueful] I will have to learn to shield my thoughts around you, Mr. Ambassador.

YETON

[Amused] I will be interested to see you try, Kathryn. However, I am more interested in the association you made. As Lieutenant Carey discussed Samantha, you imaged your first officer, Commander Chakotay. May I ask why? Please remember that I already know the answer.

JANEWAY laughs and shakes her head.

JANEWAY

Why deny it? Chakotay and I share an emotional bond. We were friends almost from the first moment we met and it could easily be more: We are comfortable around each other and respect the other enough to speak frankly whenever it is necessary.

YETON (Ethereal)

But?

JANEWAY

[Sighs] But it is impossible for us to go further, Yeton. I am a Captain and he is my first officer. It is in violation of so many fleet protocols that I can't keep track of them. Besides, I don't trust that I could keep the necessary detachment to act as his commander if we developed an intimate relationship.

YETON (Ethereal)

Ah, a self-deception coupled with a shield of protocol. Fascinating.

JANEWAY

(Shocked) What?

YETON (Ethereal)

I have made a study of this particular emotional state, Captain. Should you visit A'Tel IV again, please feel free to download a copy from a library server. To summarise the situation: You are afraid of the emotional consequences of admitting your feelings for Chakotay. To avoid confronting the issue, you hide behind fleet regulations and tell yourself plausible lies to convince yourself that you cannot be trusted with pursuing such a relationship.

JANEWAY does her landed fish impression as she tries to find a diplomatic response to YETON's devastating critique of her emotional health.

YETON (Ethereal)

I make it my business, Captain, because this issue is crippling you emotionally at a time when you must have a clear mind. If you want my recommendation, it is this: Should you ever meet him again, do yourself a favour and tell him how you feel.

JANEWAY stutters for a moment, but before she can say anything apposite or even coherent, the intercom signal sounds.

SEVEN (v/o)

Captain Janeway and Ambassador Yeton, report to the flight deck.

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY enters, followed by YETON.

JANEWAY

What's the situation, Seven?

SEVEN gestures at her monitor

SEVEN

We have been intercepted just outside of Yiriwan territorial space by three of their cruisers. They have locked on weapons and are demanding to speak with you.

JANEWAY raises her brow and sits at her station behind MOGASU.

JANEWAY

Put them on screen, Seven.

F/X - JANEWAY'S MONITOR

A YIRIWAN officer's face appears. It is difficult to tell with such an alien face, but he seems rather annoyed.

YIRIWAN

You! An alien force has attacked us and destroyed one of our worlds! Is this the price of refusing you?

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY raises her brows and then frowns.

JANEWAY

[Grim, to SEVEN] So it begins. [To Yiriwan] This is none of our doing, Commander. We warned your government that The Destroyers would come eventually.

YIRIWAN (v/o)

So you deny responsibility for this atrocity? Attack Secretary Zev-Emmen was right! You are without honour!

YETON drifts forward and into the range of the communications camera.

YETON (Ethereal)

If Captain Janeway is without honour, son of Yiriwa, then so are the Telay.

F/X - JANEWAY'S VIEWSCREEN

There is a stricken pause as the YIRIWAN stares at YETON in surprise and consternation.

YIRIWAN

[Almost squeaks] You have a Telay with you? Gods! Maybe you do tell the truth!

INT. COCKPIT

YETON (Ethereal)

Telay always tell the truth, Commander. A great darkness threatens us all and we stand in its' way. The time has come to fight.

YIRIWAN (v/o)

Fight? How? The dark ones are invulnerable and unstoppable.

JANEWAY

[Grim] They are neither one nor the other, Commander. I can provide your people with schematics to modify your weapons to maximise their effect against Destroyer technology. Time is of the essence now. It is critical that we reach Yiriwa Prime as soon as possible.

There is another pause.

YIRIWAN (v/o)

Yes. Yes, of course. Form with my cruisers and prepare to depart. Can you reach Warp 8?

JANEWAY

[Smiles] Effortlessly, Commander.

YIRIWAN (v/o)

Then let it begin.

F/X - DEEP SPACE

The Delta Flyer and the three CRUISERS jump to warp.

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY turns to YETON who is looking out at the starscape with a grim expression.

JANEWAY

Thank you for your help, Mr. Ambassador.

YETON (Ethereal)

That is my job, Captain. I fear that things will be less easy from now on.

JANEWAY nods with a grim expression and leans back in her chair.

CONTINUITY

To be continued next time in Star Trek - Voyager!

**

Author's Note

**

Just a few notes:

1. I'm sorry about the delay in posting this new episode. My computer lost Internet capability two months ago and it has taken me this long to sort the problem out. I am sure you will find this episode well worth the wait.

2. If you are a new reader, please go back and read 'Nightfall,' 'Dark Horizon' and 'Dark Destiny,' the previous three episodes of this story. Even if you have read these episodes before, please do so again. I've managed to untangle some glaring formatting and continuity errors.

3. An additional legal disclaimer. I have read Britain's Star Trek Magazine for September 2000 and have seen the previews of the Playstation game Star Trek - Invasion by Activision. I just want to assure both Activision's lawyers and my readers that the vague similarities in plot between Invasion and The Dark Times Cycle are purely co-incidental. Unless some boffin at Activision is a fan. Hmm. Better not go there.

Thanks for all the flattering reviews. Episode 5 is in the works and is currently on schedule for an October 2000 rollout.

Sincerely,

Ben Russell-Gough

5. Dark Triumph

> <meta name="Generator"> The Dark Times Cycle, Episode 5 - 'Dark Triumph'

The Dark Times Cycle, Episode 5 - 'Dark Triumph'

By Ben Russell-Gough

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Species 704 (The Destroyers) are my work.

Continuity note: This story occurs at the end of season 6/the beginning of season 7 and is an ALTERNATE UNIVERSE story. It is in

place of UNIMATRIX ZERO, as I think the Borg are over-exposed!

This story is presented in the form of a screenplay by way of an experiment. Please tell me what you think!

The forces of light have won a few small victories, but can anyone truly hope to stop The Destroyers?

TEASER

CONTINUITY

Previously on Star Trek â€" Voyagerâ€

INT. BRIDGE

JANEWAY is standing at the centre of the BRIDGE, addressing the crew.

JANEWAY

We are at war. This isn't a war any of us wanted or expected, but it is a war we must fight nonetheless. If the Destroyers are not beaten while their presence in our galaxy is still small, then we have virtually no hope of stopping them from overrunning every civilisation in the galaxy, [Quiet, but clear] including the Federation.

Brief cut of various OFFICERS reactions to JANEWAY's speech

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

JANEWAY is sitting on her couch, watching a few medium-sized lumps of rock tumble past. Her face is expressionless, but the way she is clutching her coffee mug betrays her inner torment.

CHAKOTAY enters holding a PADD. He gives it to JANEWAY, who scans its contents apathetically.

CHAKOTAY

The system looks a total loss, Captain. Both class-M worlds and a class-L that the Adronai heavily colonised are gone. Every moon and even vaguely colonisable body has a fresh set of craters and there are many refined alloy masses floating about the system. None have any power emissions.

JANEWAY checks the padd, her face cold. She sighs and looks up at CHAKOTAY with a grim expression.

JANEWAY

The Destroyers have named the game, Chakotay: Total war.

CHAKOTAY

[Angry] This isn't war, Katherine, it's genocide.

INT. ADRONAI STATION, DAMAGED CORRIDOR

SEVEN looks to the end of the side corridor and gasps.

Her POV. The corridor is empty, then there is an oval area filled with a blue-green rippling effect like the rippling of a disturbed pond. The ripples take a tall insectoid shape and a Destroyer soldier stands before us.

INT. VOYAGER SCIENCE LAB

JANEWAY is standing with TORRES, SEVEN and KIM looking at a captured Destroyer Energy Rifle.

JANEWAY turns away and heads out of the LAB.

JANEWAY

We've been on the defensive since the start of this war, people. [Slight smile] With these modifications, I think that we will be able to go hunting.

INT. BRIDGE

KIM

Captain! We've detected a Destroyer starship, about the size of a scout, approaching the asteroid field at about half light-speed. They are slowing fast and entering the field.

JANEWAY

Red alert! All hands to Battle Stations.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

POV " Looking forward from the VOYAGER towards the CHIMERA scout ship. The _VOYAGER_ swerves to the left as the CHIMERA races towards them. Golden phaser blasts strike out from the starboard main and ventral phaser banks. The blasts visibly flare against the shields of the Destroyer vessel. They glow a glassy blue shade at the impact points.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

POV looking back from the _VOYAGER_ to the CHIMERA.

Six torpedoes launch from the _VOYAGER_'s rear tubes and race towards the CHIMERA, spreading out to come at it from every direction. They do not detonate simultaneously, but at irregular intervals spread over about half a second.

The CHIMERA shudders and staggers drunkenly to the right. It's left-hand 'spine' crumples and emits a yellow-white cloud of crackling drive plasma.

New POV, from the CHIMERA looking forward towards the _VOYAGER_

--

The Starship leaps upwards, its landing thrusters glowing blue at

full power. The ship begins to rotate to the right, turning its prow to face the Chimera. The CHIEMRA fires back, but the shots shoot below the rapidly rising _VOYAGER_.

POV - Above the VOYAGER, looking down and towards the CHIMERA

The _Voyager_'s phaser banks start firing one after the other. Their blasts are unusually bright and have brighter pulses racing down their length.

As the blasts strike home, they carve burning slashes into the CHIMERA's side along the aft section, between the 'spines' and the triple 'boom' between the main hull and the prow.

F/X â€" VIEWSCREEN

The CHIMERA rolls and jerks away from the impacts, beginning to tumble. A massive yellow-white explosion boils out from between the spines. The explosions begin to spread forward. Finally the fires consume the entire ship and it disintegrates in a gigantic yellow-white fireball.

INT. BRIDGE

KIM

Target destroyed!

The ENTIRE CREW except TUVOK and JANEWAY cheer loudly. SEVEN turns from her console to hug a surprised KIM.

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

A worried-looking JANEWAY is pouring out her heart to TUVOK

JANEWAY

How am I going to win a war when I can barely win a battle?

TUVOK steeples his hands for a moment before replying.

TUVOK

One human bard once noted that 'no man is an island.' This truth does apply to our situation.

INT. ASTROMETRICS

SEVEN is standing at her preferred console, watching something on the big MAIN DISPLAY. JANEWAY stands beside her.

F/X - MAIN DISPLAY

The image of the Galaxy zooms into the Delta Quadrant (on the far side of the galactic disc). As we zoom in closer, several coloured closely fitting polygons with same-coloured points at their centres appear. A scale in light-years appears at the right-hand side of the screen.

SEVEN

The best projection we have with available data indicates that the Destroyers will eliminate all resistance within one standard year.

SEVEN touches a few controls and the image on the MAIN DISPLAY scrolls slightly to the right. Several coloured polygons boarder the red area controlled by the Destroyers. There are very few red starbursts within this area.

SEVEN

There are several races in this galactic sector that appear to be moving towards forming a multi-cultural alliance similar to the Federation.

JANEWAY looks thoughtful.

JANEWAY

Their nearest borders are about 80 light years from here. That's a good month's travel, even at maximum warp.

JANEWAY gets up and paces a little, fiddling with her com-badge. Finally, she nods decisively.

JANEWAY

The _Delta Flyer _could make it. That ship is powerful enough to defend itself if we add the same modifications to its tactical systems.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The _DELTA FLYER_ exits the _VOYAGER_'s shuttle bay, curves toward our POV and flies overhead.

INT. VOYAGER BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY stands in the centre of the BRIDGE. Everyone is at his or her stations. KIM's station begins to bleep wildly.

KIM

(Urgent) Commander, I have two Destroyer capital ships and at least six fighter-class vessels approaching at 100 mark 54!

CHAKOTAY

Battle stations!

LIGHTS and SOUNDS " Red Alert

F/X " DEEP SPACE

The Destroyer DART-class fighters race past. A few seconds later, the two Destroyer warships, a HAMMER heavy destroyer and a SABRE light destroyer scream overhead out of the Adronai Sun.

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD IN B/G

The _DELTA FLYER_ flies right towards our POV, firing two emerald green MISSILES. We track the missiles as they shoot past, detonating around the leader of a group of four DARTs. The DART tumbles out of formation, golden fire trailing from its right-hand spine.

A second later, the _DELTA FLYER_ punches through the centre of the formation under full power.

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD

The VOYAGER is coming right at us, slowly curving away to the left. The main lower port and ventral phasers fire off the bottom of the screen. Behind them, the two torpedoes flash towards the starship. A trio of pulse cannon bolts hit the lower shields and blue-white static rolls over the lower hull.

INT. BRIDGE

Several consoles spark and explode. The crew stagger from the force of the impacts

F/X â€" The VOYAGER shoots from underneath the detonation of two singularity torpedoes at full power, firing its phasers repeatedly. Torpedoes flash from the forward tubes.

New POV: The SABRE takes the full brunt of the attack, torpedoes detonating around its shields and phasers carving deeper and deeper into them. Several shots begin to carve into the hull.

INT. BRIDGE

Close-up on CHAKOTAY. He is on the edge of his seat.

CHAKOTAY

[Loud and firm] Fire all phasers, Mr. Tuvok! Carve them open!

F/X â€" The VOYAGER's phasers slice into the hull of the SABRE, tearing long blazing breaches in the hull. There are a series of explosions that spread, finally consuming the SABRE. The VOYAGER shoots out of the fireball.

New POV: The HAMMER coming in from the _VOYAGER_'s starboard flank.

New POV: Looking towards an oncoming _VOYAGER_. Several blasts from the HAMMER's pulse cannon smash into the _VOYAGER_. The first rips into the starboard nacelle, tearing it open and unleashing a silvery-blue trail of plasma. The next smashes into the secondary hull, ripping apart the hull from behind the deflector dish to the root of the support pylon of the starboard nacelle. Flames boil out before force fields seal the breached compartments. The impact knocks the _VOYAGER_ violently off course. The ship's interior and running lights flicker and dim.

INT. BRIDGE

There is chaos. Most of the lights are out and the Master Situation display is now a flaming crater. Most of the overhead cable trunks have broken open and all the display monitors show only static.

CHAKOTAY finally rises in to view. He helps PARIS to his feet and sits the younger man in the helm chair.

CHAKOTAY

Damage report!

KIM drags himself to his feet.

KIM

Main power out! Hull breach on decks 12 through 16, sections three through twelve.

PARIS

Warp and impulse engines are off-line.

COMPUTER (v/o)

Damage to warp core. Containment failure in two minutes.

CHAKOTAY looks up with a horrified expression.

F/X " VIEWSCREEN

We see an aft view. The image is poor quality, with static, blurred or double images and occasional loss of colour.

The HAMMER is slowly coming into position. The three surviving DARTs form an arc above it. A blue nimbus of energy forms around the six forward-facing 'fangs.'

INT. BRIDGE

Everyone is in a horrified pose as they watch the alien ships close in.

VORIK (v/o)

Bridge, we have ejected the warp core.

F/X Sequence " WARP CORE EJECTION

F/X " ASTEROID BELT

The HAMMER fires. The VOYAGER rises vertically up on its landing thrusters, avoiding the shot, which strikes the asteroid. The asteroid is shaken by the green-grey distortion wave and explodes with a mighty white flash.

The VOYAGER is swept aside by the massive shock wave. A second later, it hits the Destroyer ships. Two of the DARTs explode immediately. The HAMMER is shaken and two of its spines buckle.

Almost immediately, the VOYAGER's discarded warp core explodes with a blue-white flash. The HAMMER is torn apart by the massive explosion. The last DART is sent tumbling into a rock and it smashes apart.

F/X â€" VEIW FROM COCKPIT WINDOWS OF DELTA FLYER.

We see the ASTEROID FIELD and the bright flash of the warp core explosion.

SEVEN

[Hoarse] Captainâ€¦ That was the explosion of a Federation warp core. I am detecting both Destroyer and Federation alloys in considerable quantitiesâ€¦ Iâ€¦ I cannotâ€¦

JANEWAY turns to look at SEVEN. The Borg woman is crying.

SEVEN

[Stifles sobs] Captain, I cannot detect the _Voyager_.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER speeds past at warp drive.

INT. DELTA FLYER, COCKPIT

MOGASU sits at the helm and CAREY sits at the ops station. JANEWAY sits in her accustomed station behind the helm. She sips her coffee and reads a PADD.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Without the support of the _Voyager_, I don't know if I can complete our mission to form an alliance to face the Destroyers. I don't even know if I can get this small ship with the remains of my crew home. Hell, I don't even know if we will survive the next few days.

SEVEN looks up from her console.

SEVEN

Captain, we are approaching the Yiriwan homeworld.

F/X â€" YIRIWA PRIME

The DELTA FLYER is still in formation with the two YIRIWAN CRUISERS. Ahead is a marginal class-M world with no obvious large expanses of water (though several continent-sized lakes are visible). The planet is yellow-white in colour with the occasional splash of brown and green near the lakes. Three moons are in the sky.

F/X â€" Arid and mountainous terrain

The DELTA FLYER glides in, circling a few mountains before slowing right down and heading for a steep cliff-face. At the very last moment, a rectangular area of rock slides downwards, revealing a metallic hatchway, which folds upwards.

The DELTA FLYER enters the bay, which is large enough to contain the VOYAGER.

F/X " Hidden landing bay

The DELTA FLYER touches down. Immediately, the landing pad begins to sink downwards.

F/X " HANGER CAVERN

The DELTA FLYER rolls out of the lift on an anti-gravity platform. The platform transports the ship to an empty space in a rack of three-winged shuttlecraft.

INT. YIRIWAN COUNCIL CHAMBER

Several robed YIRIWANS sit in cup-shaped nests. A bright light falls on the very centre of the room. JANEWAY and SEVEN enter and stand in the bright light. JON-GLOR walks in and takes a position between them and the Councillors. He stands at the very fringe of the spotlight.

CHIEF COUNCILLOR

These 'Destroyers, ' Katherine Janeway, they have not threatened us. Why should we concern ourselves with your struggle with them?

JANEWAY draws in a breath.

JANEWAY

All species are their enemy, honoured one. In time, they will come intending to conquer or to destroy.

INT. YIRIWAN CITY, OPEN AREA

JANEWAY and SEVEN are standing together. JANEWAY is sipping one of the ubiquitous fruit juices while SEVEN paces nervously. JON-GLOR enters from the rear archway.

JON-GLOR

My friends, the Council has come to a decision.

JANEWAY looks around and looks the Yirawan negotiator in the eye.

JANEWAY

[Firm] Well?

JON-GLOR

While the Council thanks you for your warning of the activities of these 'Destroyers,' they have ruled that they cannot assist you at this time. A culture must stand or fall on their own strengths and weaknesses. We cannot interfere with this natural process. [Regretfully] Therefore the council rules that you must be on your way.

JANEWAY grimaces and draws a breath. Switch to a long view of the set. JANEWAY and SEVEN exit. They leave JON-GLOR standing alone on the balcony.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

Several moon-sized asteroids drift through the shot. Suddenly, with their characteristic shriek, four Destroyer DART-class fighters shoot past, surrounding a pair of DEVASTATOR-class bombers. The DEVASTATORS have two hulls with three spines to either side at their base. Three forward-facing 'fangs' surround the prow of the starboard hull, while the port hull ends with spheroid cap with three launch tubes cut into its structure.

We follow the DARTS and the DEVASTATORS towards one asteroid. They begin to hug the surface at medium altitude and slow down. The DEVASTATORS begin to fire bombs that drop vertically away and detonate, illuminating the entire visible area.

Our POV slowly pans away from the bombing run to a deep crater. A familiar shape sits in the gloom, hidden from direct sight. As our POV zooms in, we realise that it is the VOYAGER. Someone has roughly patched the breach in the starboard side of the secondary hull and the starboard nacelle is a mess. As we get closer, we see minimum-power blue lights shining in the interior.

INT. BRIDGE " SOME TIME LATER

CHAKOTAY is sitting in his chair (how odd that he never sits in JANEWAY's chair). KIM, TUVOK and PARIS are at their stations. WILDMAN is at science.

WILDMAN's console begins to bleep wildly.

WILDMAN

Commander! Our perimeter warning probes have detected several Destroyer ships heading our way!

There is a moment of nervousness before CHAKOTAY walks over to WILDMAN with a slow measured pace.

CHAKOTAY

Can you make an identification, Lieutenant?

WILDMAN works her console.

WILMAN

A scout and two fighters sir. [Presses a few switches] They don't seem to have detected us sir. The scout is scanning for ores like that last one.

CHAKOTAY looks up thoughtfully, then smiles broadly.

CHAKOTAY

Oh no, Harry. That scout is going to save us a lot of trouble. Bridge

to Shuttle Bay.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

With the usual unearthly screech, a CHIMERA scout and two DART fighters swoop overhead and loop slowly past asteroids on their survey of the remains of the Adronai System.

CUT TO " SMALLISH ASTEROID

In a shadow, the Captain's Yacht _Erhart_ and the Type-9 shuttles _Cochrane II_ and _Lindbergh_ wait in an inverted 'vee' formation. Their running lights are all off. The shadows deepen as the Destroyer ships swing overhead

INT. _ERHART_ _COCKPIT

CHAKOTAY sits behind two ENSIGNS at the Conn and Ops stations in the small cockpit area. TORRES stands at his side. All are wearing full tactical armour, sans helmets. CHAKOTAY is staring out of the windows.

CHAKOTAY

[Tense] Here they come, right on schedule.

INT. _ERHART_ _MAIN COMPARTMENT

Twenty Starfleet junior officers and ratings sit on two facing benches. They are wearing full armour and carrying Phaser IIIA assault rifles with under-slung nadion grenade launchers.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

Marines stand by.

F/X - ASTEROID FIELD

POV - Looking forward from behind the _Erhart_. There is a flare of red-orange from the impulse vents on the _Cochrane II_ and the _Lindbergh_. The two Type-9 shuttles race forward.

F/X " VIEW FROM _COCHRANE II_ _COCKPIT WINDOW

Heads-up Display symbology fills our view, showing the shuttle's speed and galactic bearing. There is clear evidence that the shuttle is moving very fast. The CHIMERA quickly grows in the window. The HUD displays red ersatz-3D boxes around the Destroyer ships. A targeting 'flower' appears and tracks onto the nearest DART. The legend 'PHASER LOCK' flashes below the flower.

To the right, we see the _Lindbergh_ fire a photon torpedo. The missile strikes the other DART, which tumbles out of formation and explodes.

Bright phaser pulses flash from four points along the bottom of our field of view, striking the remaining DART. The Destroyer fighter swings out to the right, but the phasers continue to track. Within a second, the Destroyer ship explodes.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The _COCHRANE II _barrel rolls through the explosion.

New POV " On the other side of the CHIMERA

The _ERHART_, ignored in the heat of the sudden attack, is slowly backing up against the CHIMERA's hull. Four small and low-power docking tractor beams activate and we briefly see a sparkle of golden light from a phaser torch cutting through the hull before the docking port attaches flush to the CHIMERA's hull.

INT. DESTROYER CHIMERA-CLASS SCOUT, HALLWAY

There is a searing point of golden light high up on the wall. In a moment, the light cuts a circular incision into the wall. The panel falls out with a loud bang. A big armoured humanoid figure steps out carrying a huge Phaser Cannon IVP. The cannon fires a series of bright golden-white pulses.

New POV - Looking down the hall

Two DESTROYER crewmen are caught in the rapid phaser fire and go down in a shower of sparks, uttering metallic shrieks.

New POV - The hole in the wall

Three other MARINES barge out of the hole in the wall. A blue-white flash catches the first of this group and a massive explosion blows off his or her chest-plate. The other two turn and fire their phaser rifles. Another pulse hits the third MARINE, who is also comprehensively blown away. The second kneels and fires her rifle again.

New POV - Looking up the corridor

A phaser bolt hits a DESTROYER soldier in the throat; the creature goes down without a sound. Another leans out and is cut down by a rapid series of phaser pulses from the first boarder's phaser cannon.

New POV - The boarding party

The first marine is CHAKOTAY. The other one still standing is TORRES. She leans down to examine the two fallen MARINES as more MARINES begin to boil out of the hull breach.

CHAKOTAY (Filtered)

According to my scans, there is a lot of activity just a little way forward of this point. It may be a control area. Let's check it out.

INT. CHIMERA ANTECHAMBER

CHAKOTAY and TORRES cautiously enter a large room, possibly some kind of antechamber, which is lit brightly from above. At the end of the room is a heavily armoured hexagonal door marked with red iconographs.

New POV - low shot towards CHAKOTAY and TORRES. The foot of a DESTROYER crewman drops into shot and quietly clicks against the deck.

CHAKOTAY suddenly swings around and fires his Phaser Cannon. The DESTROYER is blown back a good ten metres down the access corridor.

TORRES (Filtered)

Look out!

The door at the end of the room is open and a DESTROYER crewman stands, aiming his energy rifle. CHAKOTAY ducks, narrowly avoiding a blast from a Destroyer energy weapon. TORRES fires, stitching a series of phaser blasts across the DESTROYER's thorax armour. The creature shrieks and falls.

Another DESTROYER lunges forward from the doorway, knocking TORRES back. Her rifle clatters to the floor. CHAKOTAY shoots but misses and the DESTROYER grabs the barrel of the cannon, forcing it down. CHAKOTAY lets go and ducks backwards, avoiding a slash from the DESTROYER's fighting blade. The DESTROYER rears up and punches CHAKOTAY with its lower pair of arms, knocking him to the ground.

TORRES scrambles along the floor for her rifle. With a hiss, the DESTROYER turns to face her and swings its fighting blade downwards. TORRES draws her _d'ktag_ knife, grabs one of the creature's lower arms and pulls herself up. She is very close and takes the opportunity to drive her knife into the DESTROYER's midsection. The alien squeals and collapses.

INT. CHIMERA CONTROL AREA

MARINE (v/o and Filtered)

Prinze to Chakotay.

CHAKOTAY (Filtered)

Go ahead Ensign.

MARINE (v/o and filtered)

We have just taken what appears to be the engine room, Commander. Resistance has ceased.

CHAKOTAY shakes his fist in triumph.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The _DELTA FLYER_ shoots past at impulse speed. POV tracks to follow it towards a beautiful blue-white world.

F/X â€" A'TEL IV

The _DELTA FLYER_ cruises past. Our POV rotates to follow the ship as it cruises past the blue-white planetscape. As the view rotates, a large, graceful-looking space station comes into view. From the

bottom of the station, a thin tether extends towards the planet. The STATION resembles a cross between a giant jellyfish and a Water Lilly flower. As the DELTA FLYER slowly approaches one of the petal-like extensions of the space station, the edge of the hull folds open, revealing a well-lit docking area. There are several spacecraft already docked including some Yiriwan shuttlecraft and graceful squid-shaped crystalline shuttlecraft (probably Telay ships).

The hull folds closed behind the DELTA FLYER. The super-shuttlecraft manoeuvres for a moment before docking in a free slip. An organic tube extends forward and attaches itself to the side of the spacecraft.

INT. TELAY SPACE PLATFORM, CORRIDOR

JANEWAY enters the corridor and looks around. A few exotic aliens walk past on their way to somewhere. Suddenly, there is a wash of WHITE NOISE. JANEWAY frowns and touches her temples.

VOICE (Ethereal)

Welcome to Serenity High Station, Katherine Marie Janeway.

JANEWAY frown and looks around. A TELAY male in sweeping, graceful white robes stands a few metres away. Although he has a mouth, it does not move as he speaks.

VOICE (Ethereal)

I am Yeton, and I speak for my people.

INT. MEETING ROOM

JANEWAY and NEELIX sit along one side of a table while YETON sits at the head of the table.

JANEWAY

Yeton, if I gave my permission, could you read my mind and see the entire war so far as I have seen it?

YETON (Ethereal)

The process is instantaneous and painless, but I will need a moment to make a connection. Please relax.

JANEWAY closes her eyes and YETON looks in her direction. There is a hint of a blue glow in the TELAY's green eyes. After a long moment, JANEWAY opens her eyes. She gasps at the sensations she has just experienced. To her surprise, YETON is crying.

YETON (Ethereal)

[Quiet] You have enjoyed such an amazing life with such dramatic experiences. I feel your pain for your lost crew, Captain. I, too, hope that such brave and unique beings have somehow survived that terrible battle. [Firm] Of course, you have the aid of my people in your struggle. It is quite clear that it either we fight or we spend an eternity in slavery.

F/X - DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER moves past at Warp Speed.

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY enters, followed by YETON.

JANEWAY

What's the situation, Seven?

SEVEN gestures at her monitor

SEVEN

We have been intercepted just outside of Yiriwan territorial space by three of their cruisers. They have locked on weapons and are demanding to speak with you.

JANEWAY raises her brow and sits at her station behind MOGASU.

JANEWAY

Put them on screen, Seven.

F/X - JANEWAY'S MONITOR

A YIRIWAN officer's face appears. It is difficult to tell with such an alien face, but he seems rather annoyed.

YIRIWAN

You! An alien force has attacked us and destroyed one of our worlds! Is this the price of refusing you?

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY raises her brows and then frowns. YETON drifts forward and into the range of the communications camera.

YETON (Ethereal)

A great darkness threatens us all and we are all that stands in its' way. The time has come to fight.

YIRIWAN (v/o)

Fight? How? The dark ones are invulnerable and unstoppable.

JANEWAY

[Grim] They are neither one nor the other, Commander. I can provide your people with schematics to modify your weapons to maximise their effect against Destroyer technology.

There is another pause.

YIRIWAN (v/o)

Yes. Yes, of course. Then let it begin.

F/X - DEEP SPACE

The Delta Flyer and the three CRUISERS jump to warp.

INT. COCKPIT

JANEWAY turns to YETON who is looking out at the starscape with a grim expression.

JANEWAY

Thank you for your help, Mr. Ambassador.

YETON (Ethereal)

That is my job, Captain. I fear that things will be less easy from now on.

JANEWAY nods with a grim expression and leans back in her chair.

CONTINUITY

And now the continuation!

FADE

[New opening to titles] SFX " The Voyager moving at sub light in deep space.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Space: The final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Voyager. Her ongoing mission, to find her way home. To cross a galaxy, carrying the dream of exploration beyond the farthest stars. To boldly go where no one has gone before!

Opening titles

ACT 1

F/X " DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER flies in formation with a trio of Yiriwan Bludgeon-Class cruisers at high warp.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's Log: Stardate 53989.7. The Delta Flyer is en route to Yiriwa Prime to assist our new allies of the Five-Power Alliance in preparing for the coming all-out assault by the Destroyers.

INT. COCKPIT.

JANEWAY is standing next to SEVEN and discussing something quietly. The TELAY ambassador, YETON hovers (literally!) behind CAREY watching

the engineer perform a systems diagnostic.

JANEWAY (v/o)

The situation remains critical. The Destroyers have already made several probing raids against outlying Alliance colonies and I fear that we may have hours at most to prepare our allies' defences to face a decisive attack.

SEVEN completes her work on her console and moves slightly so JANEWAY can look at her monitor.

SEVEN

As Alliance tactical technologies are not as advanced as their Federation equivalents, we must first modify them to meet Starfleet engineering protocols before installing the upgrades we have developed to counter Destroyer technology.

JANEWAY

[Frowns] How much of a delay are we looking at?

SEVEN raises her brow and taps a few more controls.

SEVEN

I have already factored this preparatory stage into my calculations Captain. I anticipate no more than a 30% increase in per-vessel upgrade time.

JANEWAY nods meditatively. She checks a PADD she has been holding and smiles slightly.

JANEWAY

Fortunately, we don't have to do this alone. The Yiriwans have placed their entire network of shipyards on stand-by. As soon as we can confirm that these upgrades are safe, we can proceed immediately.

SEVEN

Captain, waiting for the decision of a committee is highly inefficient. It verges on a dangerous waste of an irreplaceable resource: time. Should we not simply proceed?

JANEWAY smiles slightly.

JANEWAY

I'm afraid this sort of work is more than engineering blueprints and time flow charts, Seven.

YETON (Ethereal)

There are certain niceties that are involved in diplomacy Annika. The Yiriwans are a proud race. Allow them to retain that pride and they will co-operate more willingly.

SEVEN reacts in surprise to the telepathic comment. She looks at YETON over her shoulder and shifts nervously in her seat before turning back to Janeway.

MOGASU

Captain, we are entering the Yiriwan home system.

JANEWAY looks around at MOGASU

JANEWAY

Take us out of warp, Ensign.

MOGASU

Aye, Captain.

F/X " YIRIWA PRIME

The DELTA FLYER, still in formation with the BLUDGEONS, drops out of warp. The BLUDGEONS break off as the FLYER swings into an orbit around the desert planet of Yiriwa Prime.

INT. COCKPIT

There is a series of bleeps. NEELIX looks at his console (the one JANEWAY usually occupies).

NEELIX

Um, Captain. I might be wrong, but I think that the Yiriwans have sent us beam-down co-ordinates.

JANEWAY leans over and checks her console. She smiles.

JANEWAY

Indeed they have, Neelix. It is amazing how far a simple crisis can change someone's attitude.

JANEWAY turns to look at her crew.

JANEWAY

Seven, you and Neelix are with me. Joe, you have command until I return. Will you accompany me, Mr. Ambassador?

YETON (Ethereal)

That is the task that I was assigned to perform, Captain.

INT. YIRIWAN TRANSPORTER CHAMBER

The transporter platform is an open-ended square box with nine square pads laid out in three rows of three. The back and side walls are open equipment racks with various flashing lights and small display screens.

There are four vertical slashes of orange light that fill out into sparkling ovoids. The ovals take on a humanoid shape. Then the sparks fade and JANEWAY, SEVEN, NEELIX and YETON stand on the pad.

A YIRIWAN officer accompanied by four GUARDS steps forward.

YETON (Ethereal)

[Annoyed] I will never get used to these blasted machines.

OFFICER

Captain Kathryn Janeway, I have orders to escort you and the Telay Ambassador to the Council Chambers. [Looks at SEVEN and NEELIX] We will not permit you to bring your subordinates at this time.

JANEWAY briefly considers throwing her weight around, but decides to co-operate for now.

JANEWAY

Very well, I will accede to the Council's demands at this critical time.

The OFFICER either bows or nods depending on his internal skeletal structure.

OFFICER

These two guards [Gestures to rear pair of GUARDS] will escort them to the meeting place you used in your first visit. You will follow me.

JANEWAY shoots a glance at YETON and 'shoos' Neelix and SEVEN along with a gesture with both hands.

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBER

JANEWAY and YETON stand in the single spotlight. The COUNCILLORS sit in their cup-shaped nests in the gloom of the far wall. ZEV-EMMEN stalks forward to the perimeter of the light and the dark. It is difficult to tell with such an alien species, but he seems extremely annoyed.

ZEV-EMMEN

So! [Points at JANEWAY] You return to us Captain! Have you more demands? Or have your people decided to conquer rather than persuade with thinly veiled threats?

JANEWAY bristles slightly but remains calm.

JANEWAY

I regret the losses your people have suffered, Attack Secretary Zev-Emmen, but the fact remains that my people are not responsible. As I warned during my last audience with this council, the Destroyers are coming.

ZEV-EMMEN

[Scornful] And I suppose that for a certain regular fee, you will be able to ensure further attacks do not take place?

JANEWAY

Do you actually believe that this is nothing more than an elaborate protection racket? Oh, my dear Zev-Emmen, you are sorely mistaken. The last time I came to warn you of the coming of this terrible threat. Now I offer you the means to defend yourselves. I ask for no payment for this, because if we do not stop The Destroyers, we have no future.

ZEV-EMMEN

[Angry] You insult my intelligence! Do you expect me to believe that you are nothing but a magnanimous voyager, coming to aid us?

YETON (Ethereal)

I expect you to believe it, son of Yirwa.

Up to now, everyone seems to have ignored YETON (this was possibly his intent). Now ZEV-EMMEN jumps slightly when he sees the Telay floating serenely beside JANEWAY. He begins to shift nervously and moves slightly away from YETON.

ZEV-EMMEN

My apologies, Lord Ambassador. I do not know what lies this one [gestures dismissively at JANEWAY] told you, but she is not to be trusted.

YETON (Ethereal)

[Cheerful] Why? Do you have some reason to suspect duplicity? Perhaps you simply need a scapegoat for your disastrous rejection of her initial warning.

ZEV-EMMEN

[Desperate, turns to appeal to the rest of the council] Janeway comes to us with nothing more than a story. We reject her pleas and then we are attacked! Is this not proof enough?

There are some rumbles of agreement from the Council.

YETON (Ethereal)

Do you really consider me so foolhardy as to be taken in by a false story?

ZEV-EMMEN turns back to YETON. He virtually starts to radiate anxiety.

ZEV-EMMEN

Well [Pause] On the surface, her case is a convincing one. Everyone knows that the Telay are a trusting people. I feel that this

one has abused your trust.

YETON seems to swell with power, his eyes glitter in the spotlight and his telepathic voice rises to a roar.

YETON (Ethereal)

[Loud and firm] I have seen her thoughts! You know that no one can hide anything from a Telay! I tell you now that we must stop this infernal bickering and act to make use of the technological gifts she brings before the dark ones destroy us all!

COUNCIL LEADER

[Amazed] You have seen her thoughts?

YETON (Ethereal)

Yes! I tell you that there were no lies in her mind. Everything she told you was true. Now, unless you wish to accuse the Telay of complicity in these attacks, I suggest that this fool [gestures at ZEV-EMMEN] withdraws his spurious charges and we proceed with winning this war.

ZEV-EMMEN hisses and flicks his forked tongue at YETON

COUNCIL LEADER

We will have no threats in this chamber,
Zev-Emmen!

ZEV-EMMEN

[Yells] He lies! He is no Telay Ambassador, but a simple criminal here to aid this woman!

COUNCIL LEADER

[Censorious] You will withdraw that statement immediately, Attack Secretary. The Telay government has confirmed the Ambassador's credentials.

ZEV-EMMEN suddenly roars and jumps at JANEWAY. YETON barely twitches his hand. A telekinetic force slams the Yiriwan politician to the floor. The COUNCIL LEADER gestures. Two guards rush in and drag the semi-conscious ZEV-EMMEN away.

COUNCIL LEADER

I offer my humblest apologies Ambassador Yeton. [Almost as an afterthought] And I apologise to you, Captain Janeway.

YETON (Ethereal)

Apologies are unnecessary, honoured one. [Looks sideways at JANEWAY, continues in a quieter voice] Yes he was an unpleasant creature, Kathryn. Be glad that you could not see the inside of his mind!

JANEWAY

[Relieved] Honoured one, there is much to be done, and little time to do it. May we proceed?

COUNCIL LEADER

By all means, yes. Let us begin.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The VOYAGER sits at the bottom of a crater, a Destroyer CHIMERA-class scout parked besides it.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

Ship's Log: Stardate 53989.9. First Officer Commander Chakotay recording. In the aftermath of our successful capture of a Destroyer scout, our Engineering staff are working hard to adapt the incredible technology of our enemies to the damaged USS _Voyager_.

INT. CHIMERA BRIDGE

TORRES and several other technicians are swarming over the control consoles. They are scanning with their tricorders, tapping on their PADDs and removing some hardware.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

What can I say about Destroyer technology that doesn't sound like hyperbole? In the first few hours of examining the captured scout, we had to re-write several laws of physics. Our engineering teams feel the absence of Seven of Nine and the Captain most keenly at such a time.

INT. VOYAGER MAIN ENGINEERING

In the background, an enormous device has replaced the Warp Core. It is a grey-green sphere, with thick toridal coils running out of the top and bottom. Thick cables are attached to the surface of the sphere and run off to various wall panels. Blue light shines from vents along its side. Various engineers stand around. They are adjusting the massive device.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

We have restored main power by installing one of the auxiliary power generators from the scout in place of our lost warp core.

[Astonished] This incredible device actually develops power from the gravitational field of an artificial singularity. Lieutenant Torres calls it a 'singularity inductor' and says that it will provide the _Voyager_ with more power than a dozen warp cores.

INT. VOYAGER CORRIDORS

Teams of crewmen assist in repairs and modifications behind various inspection panels.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

The tide of discovery from our examination of the scout beggars the

imagination. Special credit must go to Lieutenants Harry Kim and B'Elanna Torres, who are working all hours of the day to apply what we are learning to the _Voyager_'s systems. For the first time since the start of this war, I allow myself to feel a sliver of hope. Nonetheless, I will be glad when the ship is ready to depart. There is something unnerving about having that Destroyer machine parked alongside us.

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

CHAKOTAY sits, reading a PADD and shaking his head at whatever he is reading.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

[SIGHS] On a personal note, I must record my increasing concern regarding the health of Lieutenant Commander Tuvok. Since the capture of the Destroyer scout, his attitude, already negative, has worsened to an almost defeatist posture. Can a Vulcan suffer from battle fatigue?

INT. VOYAGER HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF SHUTTLE BAY

Hand-held camera looking at TUVOK and VORIK as they march forward, looking very determined. Both have full away team regalia: phasers and tricorders.

New camera shot, fixed outside of SHUTTLE BAY doors. There is a security guard. The GUARD is obviously guarding the bay during the ship-wide crisis. He comes to attention when he sees his chief.

TUVOK

Please stand aside, crewman. Ensign Vorik and I have an away mission to complete.

GUARD

I'm sorry, sir. I wasn't informed of any away mission involving a shuttlecraft.

TUVOK

Your devotion to duty is commendable, crewman. Our mission is too critical for Commander Chakotay to mention it over a communications channel. I will explainâ€|

TUVOK walks up to the GUARD as if he was going to steer him by the shoulder to one side. He reaches up and gives the GUARD a nerve pinch. The GUARD crumples and TUVOK gently lowers him to the ground.

TUVOK

That was unfortunate, but we must not allow any delay to our mission. We must negotiate a settlement with The Destroyers before the hostilities worsen beyond control.

VORIK

There is no logical alternative.

TUVOK

Indeed.

The two enter the shuttle bay.

INT. BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY is talking to a CREWMAN, who hands him a PADD and leaves. An ENSIGN stands at Tactical, while Harry KIM is at OPS. There is no one at any other station. Two technicians are fixing a new display in the area once occupied by the Mission Operations display.

KIM's console begins to bleep.

KIM

Commander! Someone has engaged the engines on the shuttlecraft _Curie_. They are opening the shuttle bay doors!

CHAKOTAY

Over-ride them and shut the shuttle down. Chakotay to Tuvok. Security team to shuttle bay.

KIM

They're blocking my override, Commander. [Pause, then shocked] Sir, it's Lieutenant Commander Tuvok's command codes!

CHAKOTAY reacts.

CHAKOTAY

[Angry and astonished] Chakotay to Tuvok, respond.

TUVOK (v/o)

[Dead calm] Tuvok here, Commander.

CHAKOTAY

Tuvok, what the hell are you doing? Shut down immediately.

TUVOK (v/o)

I am sorry, Commander. Unfortunately, I cannot comply.

CHAKOTAY

[Angry] 'Cannot comply?' That was an order, Commander.

TUVOK (v/o)

Logic dictates that one must be willing to defy a chain of command where greater issues are at stake.

CHAKOTAY shoots KIM a stunned look.

CHAKOTAY

[Gentler] What are you doing?

TUVOK (v/o)

Ensign Vorik and I are leaving to make contact with The Destroyers. I anticipate that we will be able to negotiate a truce that will allow us to leave the combat zone without risking further confrontation and needless loss of life.

CHAKOTAY

[Amazed] 'Negotiate?' [Firm] Tuvok, you heard Seven's recollections just like me. The Destroyers don't negotiate. You try this and you'll get yourself killed.

TUVOK (v/o)

I find it logical that by the Borg Collective's negative experiences with The Destroyers biased Seven of Nine's recollections. As we are citizens of the Alpha Quadrant, the Destroyers have no logical reason to wish to engage in hostilities with us.

CHAKOTAY

[Exasperated] That's bad reasoning, Tuvok. The Destroyers are out to conquer our entire galaxy. They don't care what part of it we come from.

KIM

Sir, the _Curie_ has left the shuttle bay and is moving off at half impulse.

TUVOK (v/o)

I intend to lay in an evasive course that should prevent Destroyer forces from tracing the location of the _Voyager_.

CHAKOTAY

Tuvok, listen to reason. The Destroyers are not interested in negotiation. They believe it is their _right_ to dominate. You will achieve nothing but hand yourself over to either slavery or death.

TUVOK (v/o)

There is a marginal probability you are correct, Commander. However, as Vulcans, Ensign Vorik and I have the responsibility to explore every possible peaceful avenue before resorting to further violence and destruction.

CHAKOTAY

[Desperate] What about your oath as Starfleet officers? What

responsibility does that demand of you?

TUVOK (v/o)

I am sorry, Commander. This discussion serves no further useful purpose.

SOUNDS " A brief hiss of static.

KIM

[Amazed] He cut off the signal!

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The Type-8 shuttlecraft, Curie curves up and away from the Voyager. Our POV rotates to track the shuttle as it flies past out into the asteroids.

FADE

ACT 2

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The CURIE is manoeuvring through the asteroid field at speed.

INT. CURIE COCKPIT

VORIK is watching the controls while TUVOK reads a PADD, his eyebrow quirked with concentration.

VORIK

Have you considered how we will open negotiations?

TUVOK

I suspect that the Destroyers will be open to an initial contact if we can convince them that we plan to betray our shipmates.

VORIK

I am uneasy with the concept of starting negotiations with a deception.

TUVOK turns to look at VORIK

TUVOK

I will not deceive, merely exaggerate what we have to offer them. A sophisticated culture like The Destroyers will doubtless be receptive to reason once we have convinced them to begin negotiations.

VORIK

[Thoughtful] I defer to your greater experience in these matters.

Suddenly there is a burst of white noise and the sound of an opening HAILING SIGNAL.

PARIS (v/o)

Shuttlecraft _Curie_, this is Lieutenant Paris commanding the Voyager fighter wing. Heave to and prepare for boarding.

TUVOK puts down his PADD and examines his controls. He frowns in frustration.

TUVOK

Do you detect any other ships, Ensign?

VORIK

I cannot, but the environment of this asteroid field lends itself to degraded sensor performance.

TUVOK

I am raising shields and arming weapons. [Looks up from console] I am sorry, Mr. Paris, but I cannot permit you to delay our mission. Ensign Vorik and I will defend ourselves with lethal force if necessary.

PARIS (v/o)

Alright, Tuvok. Don't say I didn't give you a chance.

TUVOK and VORIK peer out through the forward windows into space.

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD.

Behind The _CURIE_, the _COCHRANE II_ dodges from behind a nearby asteroid and sprays phaser fire towards the _CURIE_. (F/X note, you can clearly see that someone has painted the silhouette of a Destroyer DART fighter under the cockpit windows; it is a 'kill' mark, and it is obviously Paris' idea.)

INT. CURIE COCKPIT

The phaser strikes against the shields knock TUVOK and VORIK around a little.

VORIK

Shields down 45%. Shall I return fire?

TUVOK

Negative. Mr. Paris is not so foolhardy as to attempt to engage us alone. There will be other ships waiting for us.

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD

The LINDBERGH swings out from behind another asteroid. The CURIE curves towards it and fires its two beam phasers. One blast strikes. The pilot of the LINDBERGH turns upward, then has to dodge a small

asteroid.

The COCHRANE completes an innalman turn and fires directly at the CURIE's forward shields. The CURIE returns fire, but Lt. Paris manages to dance around the shots.

INT. CURIE COCKPIT

VORIK

Shields down 80%.

TUVOK

Commencing evasive manoeuvres. I will attempt to loose our pursuers in the denser regions of the field.

The flashes of several phaser near misses illuminate the windows. The cockpit shakes from the transmitted force. VORIK visibly winces.

TUVOK

[Pensive] First, I must dissuade Mr. Paris from making a further attack.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The CURIE turns to follow the COCHRANE and begins to fire its phasers. The COCHRANE twists and turns, avoiding all but a few shots.

Suddenly the COCHRANE loops up and over, turning back towards the CURIE and then diving. The CURIE dives to follow. Suddenly the LINDBERG reappears from behind and scores a direct hit with its pulse phasers. The CURIE staggers off course.

The COCHRANE begins to swerve up and down, curving to the right to follow the CURIE's evasive turn.

F/X " Paris' HUD view

The CURIE is about 120 metres ahead turning to the right and diving. The shuttle has a yellow pseudo-3D box projected around it by the HUD. A phaser targeting sight appears on the HUD. The view turns as Paris brings his fighter's guns to bear.

PARIS (v/o)

Time for a fender-bender, Tuvok.

The phasers flash from the bottom of the screen and hit the CURIE's right-hand impulse engine. There is a golden explosion as the blasts tear off the engine. The shuttle staggers off course on a trail of golden fire and begins to spin along its vertical axis.

INT. CURIE COCKPIT.

The two Vulcans are fighting the damaged systems of the shuttle. A wall panel in the area corresponding to the position of the impulse

engines has blown out. VORIK rises.

VORIK

[Calm] I will secure the damaged plasma lines.

TUVOK

[Quirks an eyebrow] Proceed.

F/X â€" View through the CURIE's forward windows.

You can see the COCHRANE II and the LINDBERG circling back towards the damaged shuttle. The CURIE's phasers flash from either side of the screen, but fail to strike either fighter.

PARIS (v/o)

Give it up, Tuvok. The _Yeager_ and the _Lovell_ are on their way too. You can't fight your way out and you can't escape in a damaged shuttle. [Lighter, almost cocky tone] You're out of options, my green-blooded friend.

TUVOK (v/o)

[Firm] I must proceed Mr. Paris.

INT. CURIE COCKPIT

TUVOK is rapidly entering commands into his panel. VORIK has put out the fire in the rear of the compartment and is working on securing the wall panel.

TUVOK

Your struggles are counter-productive, Mr. Paris. You know that it is highly improbable that we can defeat The Destroyers. A negotiated settlement is our only hope.

PARIS (v/o)

That isn't an option and you know it, Tuvok. What the hell is wrong with you?

TUVOK

I am merely thinking more clearly than you are Mr. Paris. Here is my ultimatum. You will withdraw, or I will use the CURIE's emergency transmitter to send the _Voyager_'s location to every subspace receiver within thirty light years.

PARIS (v/o)

[Uncertain] You're bluffing.

TUVOK

Vulcans do not bluff.

There is a long pause.

F/X â€" Looking through the CURIE's forward windows.

The COCHRANE and LINDBERG are in a perfect wing-pair formation. They turn and move away.

INT. CURIE COCKPIT

VORIK walks forward and peers through the windows.

VORIK

[Quirks an eyebrow] It appears that they believe you, Commander.

TUVOK

[Gently surprised] I am surprised that Mr. Paris did not attempt something illogical... Wait...

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD

The COCHRANE suddenly accelerates and snap turns away from the LINDBERG.

New POV â€" The CURIE is now underway. The fire in the wrecked impulse engine is now out.

The POV pans around to show the COCHRANE heading right for the CURIE head-on.

INT. CURIE COCKPIT

TUVOK cocks his head curiously.

TUVOK

[Thoughtful] Now, what are you doing Mr. Paris?

VORIK

Shall I evade, Commander?

TUVOK

Negative. I believe Mr. Paris is attempting to play 'Chicken;' using a ramming manoeuvre to intimidate us into turning back. [Touches a control] Mr. Paris, I still have the Voyager's co-ordinates ready to transmit. Please break off.

F/X â€" Paris's HUD view.

The CURIE is right in the centre of the phaser targeting crosshairs.

PARIS (v/o)

[Quiet] I'm sorry, Tuvok.

At the last moment, the view moves slightly to the right and the

crosshairs are pointing at a point just below one of the CURIE's flank windows. The pulse phasers fire a single burst.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The phaser blasts strike a glancing blow to the front of the CURIE. The shuttle jerks of course and its lights go out.

INT. CURIE COCKPIT

TUVOK's control panel explodes, throwing him to the deck. All the displays and cabin lights go out. After a moment, the displays return in a very low-power mode and emergency lights activate. VORIK consults a side console, so he hasn't seen TUVOK yet.

VORIK

That blast has destroyed the main control systems, Commander. We cannot manoeuvre, fight, or even activate our communications systems. [Pause] Commander?

VORIK looks down and sees a bloodied and unconscious TUVOK.

VORIK

Ah.

After a pause, he taps his com-badge.

VORIK

Vorik to _Cochrane II_. We surrender, Lieutenant.

PARIS (v/o)

Stand by for tractoring.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The LINDBERG latches a tractor beam onto the CURIE. The three shuttles move off back into the asteroids.

INT. VOYAGER SICKBAY

The DOCTOR is just finishing his examination of TUVOK. Two burly security guards stand either side of their erstwhile department chief. CHAKOTAY and TORRES stand by the main console. The DOCTOR injects something into TUVOK's neck, then leaves the examination area.

CHAKOTAY

Well, Doctor?

DOCTOR

Considering he has just had a control console exploded in his face, Mr. Tuvok is in good condition, Commander.

CHAKOTAY

And?

The DOCTOR does not respond. He obviously does not understand the question. TORRES loses her patience.

TORRES

Why did he do it, Doctor? Tuvok isn't a fool or a coward. Why did he try to betray us?

DOCTOR

[Taken aback] I'm really not sure, Lieutenant. As I said, Mr. Tuvok is in good physical condition. There is no indication of poison or any other malign influence. The only thing I can find that is unusual is that both he and Ensign Vorik have very high levels of Andralone in their blood.

CHAKOTAY

[Thoughtful] Andralone. That is the hormone that creates the 'fight-or-flight' panic response in vulcanoids, isn't it?

DOCTOR

[Surprised] Yes it is Commander. [Looks at a PADD and makes a few notes] I would characterise the saturation levels of Andralone in their blood to be near-toxic levels.

CHAKOTAY's brow furrows in thought. He paces around sickbay for a moment before stopping in front of TORRES and the DOCTOR.

CHAKOTAY

B'Elanna, have you had more than your share of nightmares recently?

TORRES nods mutely.

CHAKOTAY

Yes, me too. I've also been finding it hard to concentrate ever since we brought that Destroyer ship back here. Now we are actually installing destroyer technology into the structure of the _Voyager_ and our two Vulcans have panic attacks.

CHAKOTAY hums for a moment.

CHAKOTAY

Doctor; scan B'Elanna and me for our species' panic-producing hormones.

The DOCTOR pulls out his tricorder and scans both CHAKOTAY and TORRES. The DOCTOR frowns at the results.

DOCTOR

The equivalent hormones are present in both your of you. The concentration is an order of magnitude lower than that in Tuvok and Vorik, but it is still much higher than normal levels.

CHAKOTAY nods.

CHAKOTAY

I was afraid of that. Something external is generating this, people, and I want to know what it is and how we can stop it.

TORRES

You suspect the Destroyers?

CHAKOTAY

[Ironic] Do you know any other sociopathic conquest-obsessed species with technology that works like magic?

TORRES gives CHAKOTAY a 'ha ha, I don't think' scowl. She begins to pace thoughtfully.

TORRES

What I don't understand is why it isn't affecting all of us in the same way.

DOCTOR

I believe I may have an explanation. What is the one species feature that sets the Vulcans apart from every other species in the crew?

CHAKOTAY

They have extensive telepathic abilities.

DOCTOR

Correct, Commander. Remember that we know that there is no magic involved in this process. Their minds can transmit neurological energy over long distances. It is a kind of a biological radio system.

TORRES

[Excited] No one, however, has ever isolated or artificially duplicated the energy used or its specific wavelength. We can infer the presence of psychic energy from its effect on background radiation levels, but can't detect or manipulate the energy itself. [Grins] The Destroyers, however, may have been trying for longer!

TORRES begins tapping out commands on the main Sickbay console. After a moment, the console 'bleeps' and TORRES gapes at the results.

TORRES

[Triumphant] And here's the proof, my friends. The internal sensors are detecting an enormous psychic energy field penetrating every part of this ship. It is so large and powerful it must be artificial.

CHAKOTAY

Where is it coming from?

TORRES

That is something we've never learnt how to find out, Chakotay.
[Frowns] I suppose we might learn something if we found out when it started.

TORRES taps in a few more commands. After a moment, the computer presents the results of its search.

TORRES

[Puzzled] That's strange.

DOCTOR

Everything is strange recently, Lieutenant. You must be more specific.

TORRES frowns at the Doctor in warning. The DOCTOR backs off.
CHAKOTAY steps in.

CHAKOTAY

What have you found B'Elanna?

TORRES

According to these readings, we've had this energy field present ever since we entered the Adronai System. It seems to come from every direction. But take a look at this. [Traces out a line on the screen] The intensity jumps several orders of magnitude from just six hours ago.

CHAKOTAY

Six hours? That's when weâ€

TORRES

Yes, Chakotay. That's when we first powered up those field generators we have stripped from the Destroyer vessel's weapons systems.

TORRES begins to pace again, her eyes unfocussed.

TORRES

We know that the Destroyers' technology uses some kind of resonant energy field. It is almost as if they have tapped in to the underlying rhythms of the cosmos or something. [Pauses, becomes grim]

As well as massively increasing the destructive power of their weapons, these resonant fields generate huge interference fields.

TORRES turns to CHAKOTAY. Her explanation speeds up as she goes. It feels more and more 'right.'

TORRES

One aspect of this phenomenon is the jamming field that screws up our targeting sensors. Could there also be a telepathic component, creating fear and uncertainty in anyone capable of sensing telepathy? [Shakes her head in disbelief] It sounds crazy, but that is the only explanation I can think of.

CHAKOTAY shakes his head. He is smiling in amazement and is clearly very proud of TORRES' deductive abilities.

CHAKOTAY

Every humanoid has some hint of psi-sensitivity. This sounds like one hell of a weapon. I use the term 'hell' literally. Is there anything we can do about this, B'Elanna?

TORRES

The field generators were all fixed in heavy-metal casings with dampening field generators. I wondered why at the time, and now I know.

DOCTOR

Until these modifications are complete, Lieutenant, I would appreciate it if you could shut those devices down. It would make treating Mr. Tuvok and Mr. Vorik much easier.

TORRES grins in a fey fashion.

TORRES

Consider it done, Doctor. I want a good night's sleep for once.

TORRES turns to leave. CHAKOTAY looks very thoughtful.

CHAKOTAY

B'Elanna [Waits until TORRES looks at him.] Could installing theseâ€¦ these resonance generators in our shields protect us from these interference fields?

TORRES grin turns very nasty.

TORRES

Indeed they could, Chakotay. I think the Destroyers have a surprise or two due to them, don't you?

FADE

ACT 3

F/X " DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER and a selection of fifteen TELAY, YIRIWAN and other ALLIANCE Fighters race past in a tight 3-dimensional diamond formation. They are travelling at high warp speed. Among them are: Three Telay Manta-class fighters, basically a flat delta wing in the characteristic Telay shining blue crystalline alloys. There are also four Yiriwan TRIAD-class fighters, a narrow cigar-shaped hull with three narrow wings arranged into a three-pointed star around the hull.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's Log: Stardate 53991.0. Having agreed with the governments of the Stellar Alliance to join forces against The Destroyers, the Delta Flyer is proceeding to the P'Dar System, close to the border with Destroyer-held space. According to both Alliance records and Seven of Nine's recollection of the Great War 200,000 years ago, the Destroyers typically begin any advance against a system by sending a scouting party to determine the defences they face. I hope that we can send these invaders a message by intercepting and destroying these scouts.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

MOGASU sits at the helm, JANEWAY behind him at the operations station. SEVEN is at tactical and CAREY at engineering. There is no sign of NEELIX.

SEVEN finishes running a program on her console. She seems gently pleased at the results.

SEVEN

Captain, according to my simulations, we have 150% of the forces required to defeat the Destroyer scouting party.

JANEWAY

[Frowns at her own console] What can we expect to face, Seven?

SEVEN

[Checks her displays] Two scouts and twelve fighters.

MOGASU

[Nervous] Doesn't sound too hard.

JANEWAY looks up. She doesn't seem too pleased.

JANEWAY

If there is one thing I've learnt over the last six years, Ensign, it's this: Never underestimate the universe's capacity to send an

unexpected problem your way.

MOGASU

I'll keep my eyes open, Ma'am.

JANEWAY smiles slightly.

JANEWAY

You do that.

SEVEN

[Urgent] Captain! I am detecting several transwarp egresses.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

POV pans from the alliance fighters, past the yellow P'Dar sun to an empty patch of space. There are several flares of white light as two CHIMERA scouts and twelve RAMPAGE heavy fighters drop out of transwarp.

The RAMPAGE has two hulls and three spines on either side of the hull. Unlike the DEVASTATOR bomber, it has three 'fangs' pointing forward from both hulls.

The Destroyer vessels deploy their lateral spines and accelerate towards our POV. They shoot past with their characteristic scream.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

JANEWAY wears a grim expression and is clearly very tense. She tightens her seat restraints.

JANEWAY

Here they come. Seven, order the squadron to adopt formation Janeway-Alpha-Five. Stand by photon torpedoes, pattern Lambda.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The fighters spread out into four groups of four, staggered vertically. The _Delta Flyer_ is leading the uppermost group.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

JANEWAY

[Points forward] Fire torpedoes!

SEVEN touches a control.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

All sixteen fighters fire a pair of torpedoes. It is a multi-coloured barrage of green, yellow, gold, red and violet. Our POV follows the torpedoes past. The Destroyers, arrogant and certain, fly _right into_ the barrage. There are a series of massive explosions, not

simultaneous, but staggered at irregular intervals. One CHIMERA drops out of formation. Its starboard spine has crumpled and is leaking golden plasma. Two RAMPAGES explode.

The remaining CHIMERA opens fire with its pulse cannon. Eight of the surviving RAMPAGES charge the Alliance formation.

F/X â€" VIEW FROM DELTA FLYER COCKPIT WINDOW

The CHIMERA is firing and eight Destroyer fighters are charging towards our POV. They are also firing their pulse cannon.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

JANEWAY visibly jumps as the first shots from the CHIMERA shoot past, causing blue flashes to flare in the side windows.

JANEWAY

Break by pairs! Commence evasive manoeuvres!

MOGASU

Engaging evasive manoeuvres, pattern Gamma.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The alliance FIGHTERS break into eight pairs. The first shots from the Destroyer ships fail to connect.

New POV â€" Close-up on the DELTA FLYER

The DELTA FLYER pitches up, rolls onto its back and dives sharply, curving towards us. On its wing (behind and to the right) is a Telay MANTA.

F/X â€" VIEW from DELTA FLYER Cockpit windows

As the DELTA FLYER pitches up, a RAMPAGE crosses its nose.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Fire phasers!

All three forward phasers fire in sequence. The RAMPAGE shudders.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Reduce velocity to half impulse and get us in behind them, Ensign. Then go back to emergency full impulse power. Seven, keep firing.

The phasers fire again as the DELTA FLYER moves in behind the RAMPAGE. After four hits, the Destroyer fighter explodes.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

MOGASU pumps the air with his fist.

MOGASU

Yeah! One more bad guy down!

SEVEN

Captain, we've got another Destroyer fighter approaching from the rear!

JANEWAY

[Firm] Let our wingman deal with it. Ensign, plot an attack course towards that scout.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

A RAMPAGE is behind the DELTA FLYER. The MANTA rolls over and drops back behind it. The MANTA fires a single phaser blast, which illuminates the RAMPAGE's shields. The RAMPAGE pulls up, then drops down, and then repeats the manoeuvre, trying to get behind the MANTA. When it gets an angle, it fires its six pulse cannon. The MANTA dodges all the shots but seems to have suffered damage anyway. It briefly stops manoeuvring, then accelerates, curving to the right. It is heading right towards the DELTA FLYER!

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

SEVEN reacts in surprise when she sees the MANTA on a collision course out of her left-side window.

SEVEN

Captain! Collision starboard!

JANEWAY

Pitch up, full thrusters!

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER pitches up barely in time. The MANTA strikes a glancing blow against the lower hull and tumbles away.

INT. COCKPIT

Everyone jerks from the impact. Several control panels spit sparks and the lights dim briefly.

SEVEN

Shields down 33%!

CAREY

I'm reading lots of secondary damage to our navigational and tactical systems. I'm trying to re-route now.

New POV over JANEWAY's shoulder, out of the right-hand windows

The MANATA tumbles away from the DELTA FLYER. It is struck by six

electric blue-white pulses of energy (coming from the bottom right) and explodes in a massive fireball. JANEWAY winces.

New POV, looking aft from the helm console

JANEWAY

What the hell happened?

SEVEN works her console.

SEVEN

Our wing ship suddenly broke formation and attempted a maximum thrust escape manoeuvre. [Frowns, checks console] The other two Telay fighters are also exhibiting anomalous behaviour.

JANEWAY

'Anomalous behaviour?'

SEVEN

They are breaking formation and attempting to leave the combat zone. They are actively avoiding coming within 1,000 metres of any Destroyer vessel, even if that means attempting to shoot a friendly vessel out of their way.

JANEWAY looks horrified.

F/X " DEEP SPACE

A Telay fighter charges a section of four Alliance fighters. When they don't get out of the way fast enough, it opens fire, destroying one. It then collides with the fighter behind that, destroying both. A RAMPAGE swoops on the two survivors and picks them off with single shots.

F/X " View from DELTA FLYER cockpit windows

Another RAMPAGE meets its fiery fate at under the DELTA FLYER's phasers.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

SEVEN

Captain, the Telay breaking off has destabilised our formations and has allowed the Destroyer fighters to score several victories. We are now outnumbered and outgunned.

JANEWAY scowls. She does not like it, but there is no choice.

JANEWAY

[Venomous] Damn! Order every ship with a clear shot to fire on the scout, then order a retreat. Re-group back at Yiriwa Prime.

SEVEN

Yes, Captain.

MOGASU

Captain, we've got another enemy fighter closing on us.

JANEWAY checks her console.

JANEWAY

Hard a port and pitch up. Fire photon missiles.

F/X â€" View from DELTA FLYER cockpit windows

A pair of green photon missiles shoots towards a RAMPAGE in the middle distance. The strike home and the enemy fighter staggers sideways.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Fire phasers.

All three phasers fire simultaneously and rip off the RAMPAGE's right-hand forward hull. The crippled fighter tumbles away trailing fire.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER is the last of five fighters to flash to warp speed to the left. A RAMPAGE crosses the foreground and turns to the right. A few seconds later, both CHIMERA scouts, one damaged, move past, continuing their mission, surrounded by the three other surviving RAMPAGES.

FADE

F/X â€" ADRONAI ASTEROID FIELD

Four DARTS shriek past in a perfect diamond formation. Our POV drops down to show the VOYAGER, still in its crater with the captured CHIMERA parked beside it.

INT. ENGINEERING

CHAKOTAY stands with TORRES at the main console, watching the SINGULARITY INDUCTOR power up.

TORRES

Power output at 50%, Chakotay. [Shakes her head] That's all the power our system can take without blowing out the main power relays and we still aren't running that thing full out.

CHAKOTAY

It seems a shame to waste all of that power. See if you can run that excess through the secondary relays to the weapons and

shields.

TORRES

On the principle that "every little bit helps?" [Sighs] I'll look into it Chakotay, but don't blame me when the phaser emitters melt down. On the bright side, we now have all the power we'll ever need for the replicators. We won't have to endure Neelix's 'food' unless we want to, or if we enjoy pain.

CHAKOTAY is laughing by the end of TORRES' dry comments. She manages a smile, even though she seems very tired.

CHAKOTAY

[Still chuckling] So, what is it you wanted to talk about, B'Elanna?

TORRES pauses and checks a display.

TORRES

Umâ€¦ Oh yeah, what do you want to do with our stores of antimatter?

CHAKOTAY

[Nonplussed] Excuse me?

TORRES

The Singularity Inductor works using just our deuterium fuel. We have about 20 cubic metres of anti-deuterium slush that we don't need anymore.

CHAKOTAY takes a moment to come to terms with the fact that the antimatter is now surplus to requirements.

CHAKOTAY

Keep about 5 litres for the shuttles, B'Elanna. [Smiles gently] Turn the rest into photon torpedoes. Like you said: "every little bit helps."

TORRES

That's enough for at least thirty or forty torpedoes.

CHAKOTAY

Well, I think that we'll need them all.

CHAKOTAY walks out of ENGINEERING, whistling a merry tune.

FADE

INT. SECURITY AREA, YIRIWAN CITY

A TELAY pilot sits in a room bare of all but a pair of chairs and a small table. Like his entire race, he is tall and willowy with almost fleshless limbs. He seems totally exhausted; his body slumped. JANEWAY and YETON observe through a two-way mirror.

JANEWAY

[Cold] What happened, Ambassador?

YETON (Ethereal)

I do not know, Captain. Our warriors do not panic. On that fact, we built a peace that lasted half a century.

JANEWAY

[Doing a 'slow burn'] Well I'm afraid that this one certainly did panic, Mr. Ambassador. We lost seven ships because your people suddenly went berserk in the battle zone.

YETON (Ethereal)

I cannot excuse what happened, Captain. [Cold] I must add that I find your tone more than a little insulting.

JANEWAY sighs and rubs her eyes.

JANEWAY

Look, we can trade insults later. I just want to know what happened and how we can repair the damage.

There is a long pause. YETON frowns slightly and turns back to the window.

YETON (Ethereal)

[Reluctant] I have scanned his memories, Kathryn, but I am not sure how useful they are.

JANEWAY

[Encouraging] Just tell me what you see, Yeton. In a situation as strange as this, who knows what may be relevant?

There is another long pause before YETON replies.

YETON (Ethereal)

The cause was indeed fear, Kathryn, but not fear of any kind I have encountered before. He was understandably nervous at the start of the engagement, but once the fight began he was able to focus his whole on the battle. Thenâ€¦ [Beat] Then a Destroyer fighter scored a near miss on his fighter. He suffered no damage but, almost immediately, he felt fear. The most terrible fear. Not fear of the Destroyers, but fundamental fears, things from the darkest of nights and the most primitive of memories.

JANEWAY

[Quiet] What do you mean Yeton?

YETON shrugs

YETON (Ethereal)

[Frustrated] There seems to be no sense to it, Captain. This pilot did panic, it seems; but not due to the battle, but due to an attack from the most fundamental fears and terrors in the Telay soul.

JANEWAY holds herself as if she feels cold.

JANEWAY

Could this have been some manner of telepathic attack?

YETON (Ethereal)

Not of any kind I am familiar with, Captain. Then again, with the Destroyers, who knows?

JANEWAY

Perhaps one person might. (Taps com-badge) Janeway to Seven of Nine. Report to the security level.

YETON (Ethereal)

You hope that her knowledge of the Destroyers may assist us.

JANEWAY smiles. Sometimes being around a telepath saves a lot of time.

FADE

INT. SECURITY AREA, YIRIWAN CITY

SEVEN is standing with JANEWAY and YETON. SEVEN is carrying several PADDS and is working on one.

SEVEN

In the Borg download I experienced, there are records of similar incidents involving Destroyer technology and telepathic races. However, nothing on this scale appears in any report.

YETON (Ethereal)

[Thoughtful] We Telay design our technology to receive telepathic impulses, Seven. Could the fighter's on-board computer contain records of a telepathic attack?

SEVEN frowns. She walks over to one of the circular Yirwiwan display screens and begins to tap in commands.

SEVEN

> It is unlikely, Ambassador Yeton. Furthermore, while the Destroyers are telepathic in their own right, I cannot see how they could generate such a continual assault.<p>

The monitor displays an OKUDAGRAM of information in YIRIWAN pictograms. SEVEN reads for a moment and frowns.

SEVEN

Regrettably, there seems to be no way to find out. At the time the pilot's memories indicate that the 'panic attack' began, a massive power surge temporarily overloaded all the control-input systems on the fighter.

YETON (Ethereal)

Amazing! [Glides forward to join SEVEN] Our fighters have very efficient electronic shields on their systems. [Turns to JANEWAY and answers an unspoken question] Yes, Captain, they are equal to those on the _Delta Flyer_.

There is a long pause.

SEVEN

Then some other incident must have caused this surge.

JANEWAY begins to pace

JANEWAY

We know that Destroyer weapons create a kind of resonance effect that spreads the damage they cause far from the impact siteâ€¦

YETON (Ethereal)

[Completes JANEWAY's sentence] Could this effect also create a 'fear' effect in psi sensitives?

SEVEN

[Thoughtfully] I cannot see how. [Beat] However, there is no other explanation for this effect. [Turns to JANEWAY] As I have previously mentioned, Captain, the Borg have assimilated psi-shielding technology. With your permission, I will fit a generator to all Telay ships to protect their crews against this effect.

YETON (Ethereal)

[Firm] I will assist you to calibrate the system so that our communications impulses are still allowed through.

SEVEN

That is relevant.

JANEWAY smiles in triumph.

JANEWAY

Let me know when you finish, Seven. By now the Destroyers will have finished their scouting operation in the P'Dar system. Their main fleet can't be far behind, secure in the knowledge that they can rout

any opposition. [Her smile becomes malicious] I think it is time to punish their overconfidence. [Beat, raises eyebrow] Don't you?

FADE

ACT 4

F/X " ADRONAI ASTEROID FIELD

A SABRE light destroyer accompanied by a flight of four DARTS cruises past, dodging through the asteroids. As it passes behind one asteroid, our POV zooms out and pans to the left. We see a Federation PROBE hovering in the shadow of the asteroid.

F/X " SURFACE OF LARGE ASTEROID

The VOYAGER and the captured CHIMERA still sit side-by-side on the surface of the asteroid.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

CHAKOTAY sits at the head of the table. PARIS, TORRES and KIM sit on one side; TUVOK, The DOCTOR and WILDMAN sit along the other side.

CHAKOTAY

Firstly, I want to notify you formally all that I am entering a commendation in the ship's log for all of your work. You have displayed professionalism and courage beyond the call of duty and you can all be justly proud.

CHAKOTAY looks around at the expressions on his senior crewmembers' faces. He then turns to TUVOK.

CHAKOTAY

I'm sure that you will all want to join in welcoming Lieutenant Commander Tuvok back to duty. It hasn't been the same without you.

There are murmurs of 'Welcome back' from several directions.

TUVOK

[Severe] Thank you Commander. I must admit that I find returning to my duties is agreeable.

CHAKOTAY nods, wearing a gentle and pleased smile. He then looks around the table again.

CHAKOTAY

Now, can I have your final reports, please?

PARIS sits up straighter.

PARIS

The new drive systems are on line, Commander. I must admit that looking at the warp power simulations for the new drive solenoids make me sweat, but the _Voyager_ will be faster than ever.

TORRES

We have more-or-less integrated the salvaged Destroyer technology into our systems, Chakotay. We'll need to perform some tests once we are underway, but I can't see any problems.

KIM

[Enthusiastic] All ship's systems and departments are manned and they are ready for anything.

TUVOK raises an eyebrow at that and CHAKOTAY's smile gets a little broader.

WILDMAN

All sensors are ready and functioning normally, Commander. The new Resonance Field sensors are on-line and appear to be functioning normally.

CHAKOTAY

'Appear to be functioning normally?'

WILDMAN shrugs helplessly.

WILDMAN

No one really has any idea what normal for this thing is Commander. As B'Elanna says, we'll have to work the kinks out as we go.

CHAKOTAY nods acceptance.

DOCTOR

I can report that there have been no further side effects to the Resonance Field generators. It appears that we have solved this particular problem.

TUVOK

Modified weapons and defensive systems are all on-line. We now have 105 photon torpedoes available.

CHAKOTAY nods thoughtfully, then turns to KIM.

CHAKOTAY

Harry, what sort of opposition awaits us out in the asteroid field?

KIM

The Destroyers have established regular patrols through the field, Commander. We've seen one of their frigates, usually accompanied by fighters, pass about once every four hours.

TUVOK

I find it unlikely that we will be able to exit this area without encountering some resistance.

PARIS

I've got an idea in that area. [Waits until all are watching him] Well, the way I see it, we've got to hit their nearest patrol immediately, then get out while they are trying to figure out why it has stopped reporting in.

TUVOK

I am inclined to agree with Mr. Paris. Adopting a defensive posture when facing an enemy of this power and aggression would be an error. Aggressively attacking the nearest opposition would definitely allow us the tactical advantage.

CHAKOTAY nods thoughtfully.

CHAKOTAY

Okay Tom, I want you to liaise with Tuvok and flesh out your plan. I want to see it before we go any further. Dismissed, and well done again.

The crew filter slowly out of the room. CHAKOTAY sits alone for a moment. He stands, massages the bridge of his nose and then exits.

F/X " SURFACE OF ASTEROID

The VOYAGER sits alongside the parked CHIMERA.

INT. BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY stands in the centre. KIM is at Ops, TUVOK is at Tactical, WILDMAN is at Science and an unidentified ENSIGN is at Conn.

CHAKOTAY

All departments report readiness.

KIM

Ships Operations, we're go, Commander.

TUVOK

Tactical, go.

WILDMAN

Sensors, go.

TORRES (v/o)

Engineering is green and go, Chakotay.

ENSIGN

Conn ready, Commander.

CHAKOTAY

Conn; stand by main landing thrusters.

F/X " EXT. VOYAGER

One by one, the VOYAGER's external and running lights come on. The warp nacelles and main deflector begin to glow a ghostly blue colour and several small grey-black attachments to the hull near the phaser strips and shield grids begin to glow with the electric blue colour of Destroyer technology.

INT. BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY sits down in his chair with a satisfied smile.

CHAKOTAY

Thrusters to full power Ensign. Take us up.

F/X " SURFACE OF ASTEROID

The VOYAGER rises away from the asteroid, its thrusters flaring blue. The starship comes to a hover and its landing gear folds away. The VOYAGER's prow rises up to 60 degrees from the horizontal and the ship moves forward, away from the asteroid that has been its home and shelter for over a month.

INT. BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY is checking something on the centre console.

CHAKOTAY

Bridge to Engineering. Engage impulse engines.

TORRES (v/o)

Impulse engines on-line Bridge. Impulse power available at your discretion.

CHAKOTAY

Conn, ahead full impulse.

F/X " ADRONAI ASTEROID FIELD

The VOYAGER's impulse engines glow a bright orange and the starship lunges forward into the field.

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD

A SABRE and six DARTS slowly work their way through the field. Our POV rotates to show the view looking across the SABRE to the left. The VOYAGER moves from behind an asteroid and stops in full view, as if waiting.

The SABRE rotates to face the VOYAGER. Four of the six DARTS zip towards the Federation starship with their signature 'screech' sound. The VOYAGER continues to wait, then at the very last moment, it dips down and accelerates away.

INT. BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY stabs at a control on the centre console.

CHAKOTAY

—

Voyager to Cochrane_ II_. Now, Tom!

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD

Four Type-9 shuttles dart from behind the VOYAGER and shoot towards the oncoming DARTS.

F/X â€" VIEW FROM COCHRANE II COCKPIT WINDOW

The DARTS are ahead in a loose formation, firing wildly with their pulse cannon. The shots whiz past our point of view, but there is no indication of a hit. The HUD displays pseudo-3D boxes around them and the SABRE in the distance.

PARIS (v/o)

All fighters, punch through their formation and loop in behind them.

The phaser-targeting flower centres on the nearest DART. Opposing pairs of pulse phasers fire from the bottom of the screen. There is a new feature to the phaser blasts: there is a visible grey 'blur' effect around them like the beginning of a cloaking effect. The blasts strike the lead DART, which instantly explodes into flame.

F/X â€" ASTEROID FIELD

The Type-9s shoot past the three surviving DARTS and innalmann turn around. The DARTS break up and down, but they cannot outmanoeuvre the Federation fighters. One is destroyed immediately.

F/X â€" VIEW FROM COCHRANE II COCKPIT WINDOWS

Another DART is centred in PARIS' gun sights. Pulse phasers flash and the DART explodes.

PARIS (v/o)

Hey, these new resonance generators work!

CHAKOTAY (v/o "Filtered")

All fighters, break off and engage the frigate.

The view out of the window whirls and the SABRE centres in the view. The Destroyer frigate is firing its pulse cannon randomly into space, putting up a wall of energy around it.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The VOYAGER charges forward. As it accelerates it fires its forward upper starboard phaser bank. There is the same 'blur' affect around this blast as we saw around the shots from the fighters' phasers. One blast strikes the remaining DART and it tumbles away, plasma bleeding from its port spine. As the VOYAGER passes it, the starship finishes the fighter off with a blast from the ventral phaser array.

Our POV rotates to show the SABRE. The Destroyer frigate fires all six forward pulse cannon at once. The VOYAGER's forward shields illuminate.

INT. BRIDGE

Everyone is thrown backwards into their seats by the impact. The lights are steady and there is no dramatic effect from the impacts.

CHAKOTAY

Damage report!

TUVOK

Shields are down 18% but holding. There is no indication of collateral damage.

TORRES (v/o)

The resonance generators are working, Chakotay! There is no indication of the secondary damage effects we saw before!

CHAKOTAY

That's good news B'Elanna. [Turns to ENSIGN at the Conn] Ensign, engage attack pattern Theta. Mr. Tuvok, fire phasers; pattern two nine.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The Voyager sweeps out to the left, then curves up and around to come alongside the SABRE, moving past it on its right side. The VOYAGER plays its phasers over the SABRE's flanks, illuminating its shields and causing it to veer away from the Starship.

The SABRE fires its flank pulse cannon, striking the VOYAGER and weakening its shields. As the battle between the two starships

continues, the Type-9s pick off the last two DARTS without taking any damage.

INT. BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY checks the centre console. WILDMAN checks her own console before reporting.

WILDMAN

[Excited] Commander, the Destroyer frigate's shields are down to just 25% output. They are withdrawing!

CHAKOTAY grins, then his face becomes stern and firm.

CHAKOTAY

We can't let them get away.

There is another shuddering hit against the VOYAGER that makes everyone stagger. CHAKOTAY grimaces and turns back to the ENSIGN at Conn.

CHAKOTAY

Conn, come to course 122 mark 47, and then pitch up to a reverse course. Mr. Tuvok, fire phasers: pattern one zero.

TUVOK

The Destroyer vessel is preparing to fire their primary weapon.

CHAKOTAY

Conn, liase with Ops. As soon as they begin their firing sequence, go to full positive pitch and invert. [Turns to KIM] Harry; tell Tom to make a torpedo run on the enemy.

KIM

Aye, sir.

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The VOYAGER turns away from our POV, then suddenly pitches up and over. The main upper and then the main lower phasers fire.

New POV " looking towards the SABRE

The SABRE takes the hits head-on. The second hits cause flares of yellow-white energy to flash around the prow of the SABRE. There is a nimbus of blue energy around the forward facing 'fangs,' then an intense pencil-thin beam of blue-white energy shoots out.

New POV " looking 'down' on the VOYAGER from just ahead

The VOYAGER (still 'upside down') suddenly moves upwards and barely dodges the shot. The upper shields glow from the energy of the near miss. The starship inverts.

New POV " looking out into the ASTEROID FIELD

The Type-9s sweep towards our POV in pairs. The first pair both fire a single photon torpedo each and break away. The second pair also fires a single torpedo each.

New POV " looking at the SABRE from just ahead and below

The torpedoes strike the starboard hull and send the ship lurching away to the left. The distinctive blue lights fade.

INT. BRIDGE

Close-up on CHAKOTAY, now standing in the centre of the BRIDGE

CHAKOTAY

All forward phasers fire!

F/X " ASTEROID FIELD

The VOYAGER's main upper and lower and its ventral phaser bank fire simultaneously.

New POV " looking towards the SABRE, head-on. The Destroyer vessel is burning amidships. The phaser blasts strike home on the prow, tearing deep into Destroyer vessel. There is a pause as explosions spread aft along the length of the ship, then it is gone in a huge detonation.

The COCHRANE II does a dramatic victory roll over the explosion

PARIS (v/o)

Yeah!

INT. BRIDGE

Everyone cheers except CHAKOTAY, who sinks into his seat with a relieved sigh, and TUVOK, who maintains his Vulcan calm.

KIM

Target destroyed! We did it Commander!

CHAKOTAY

Yes. Yes we actually did, didn't we? [Shakes his head and smiles ruefully] Mr. Kim, co-ordinate the recovery of our fighters. Ensign, [looks at ENSIGN at the Conn] Set a course for the alliance of worlds Captain Janeway intended to contact and engage at Warp 9.98 as soon as we are clear of the Asteroid Field.

The rest of the Bridge crew settle down and respond to CHAKOTAY's orders.

ENSIGN

Yes sir [Checks console] ETA at the nearest alliance system is 10 days. [Looks over her shoulder at CHAKOTAY] That is assuming we can maintain that speed for that long, sir, it's well over our maximum rated speed.

CHAKOTAY

Oh, that will be the least of our worries, Ensign; if what Lieutenant Torres tells me about our new drive system is true. [Sighs] Ladies and gentlemen, I have had enough of this asteroid field. Let's get out of here.

FADE

F/X " DEEP SPACE " THE P'DAR SYSTEM

Filling our view is P'Dar II, a beautiful Earth-like world with two moons. The POV rotates up and to the right until a massive space fleet comes into view. There are at least 60 capital ships from every world in the Stellar Alliance, including Yiriwan and Telay designs.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Captain's Log, Stardate 53998.9: The _Delta Flyer_ has joined a fleet of Alliance warships in the P'Dar system.

Our POV zooms slowly in so that we can see the DELTA FLYER holding station at the head of the fleet.

JANEWAY (v/o)

According to all of our available intelligence data, we can expect this system to come under attack by the Destroyers at any time. Now the time has come to put all the work done by Seven of Nine and Lieutenant Joseph Carey to the ultimate test. Will our new psi dampners protect our Telay allies from the psi fields generated by Destroyer technology? Will our modifications of our weapons give us enough of an advantage to match the Destroyers in battle? We shall soon learn the answers to these and many other questions.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT.

All the crew is at their respective stations, including NEELIX, who is sitting beside SEVEN. JANEWAY fidgets uneasily in her seat. She is continually checking her console.

JANEWAY (v/o)

This is the decisive moment. I cannot even hope to predict what may happen next. If the worst should happen, I have this message to whoever may hear this log next: No captain has ever had a more courageous, more professional crew and more reliable and wonderful friends. Even if I am to die this day, I consider myself blessed to have known them. [Sighs] If I were to have only one wish fulfilled, it would be to speak with Chakotay one more time, to hear his calm certainty and quiet support.

JANEWAY looks up and turns to SEVEN

JANEWAY

Seven, is there any sign of enemy activity?

SEVEN

No Captain.

NEELIX

[Nervous, trying to be cheerful] Well, maybe they aren't planning to attack this system after all.

JANEWAY

No, Mr. Neelix, they're coming alright. [Looks out of the right-hand windows and scowls] The question is when and what will be their first move?

SEVEN's console begins to beep. JANEWAY almost jumps out of her seat and turns back to SEVEN.

JANWAY

What is it?

SEVEN frowns.

SEVEN

I cannot tell, Captain. We have detected a contact approximately 100,000 kilometres from the main orbital facility, and then it disappeared.

SEVEN taps in a command.

SEVEN

Diagnostics are normal.

JANEWAY

Janeway to fleet. Dispatch two fighters to the main orbital facility.

F/X " THE FLEET

Two Yiriwan TRIAD-class fighters race away from the fleet and head towards a space station, a cubical construct with thick, short cones projecting from every face.

YIRIWAN PILOT (v/o " filtered)

No indications of enemy activity so far" wait"

F/X " DEEP SPACE

With the typical shimmer, a black PROJECTILE de-cloaks. It cruises forward for a moment, then turns towards the STATION. Three short

fins fold out from around its base. Its impulse engine flashes red and it shimmers out of view again.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

The crew listen to the report.

YIRIWAN PILOT (v/o â€" filtered)

We picked up a fast-moving projectile of some sort, and then we lost the trace.

JANWAY

[Quiet] Some sort of cloaked probe?

SEVEN

That is a distinct possibility, Captain.

JANEWAY

[Puzzled] But why? They've already had their scouts in this system.

YIRIWAN PILOT (v/o â€" filtered)

We've got the sensor trace backâ€¦| Captain, we're detecting an artificial singularity warhead!

JANEWAY sits up

JANEWAY

[Horrified] Intercept it! Destroy it now!

F/X â€" SPACE NEAR THE STATION

The two TRIADS are turning towards the station. The PROJECTILE de-cloaks for a moment, corrects its trajectory and disappears. The TRIADS whirl towards the last position of the PROJECTILE and fire. The blasts flare uselessly into space.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

YIRIWAN PILOT (v/o â€" filtered)

[Frustrated] It's no good, Captain. It de-cloaks, then cloaks again before we can get a target lock!

JANEWAY

[Urgent] Go to manual, damnit! Match its course and try to target it visually.

F/X â€" SPACE NEAR THE STATION

The two TRIADS are flying through space. The PROJECTILE briefly de-cloaks. The TRIADS fire but miss. The PROJECTILE cloaks again before they can correct their firing angle.

F/X " VIEW FROM DELTA FLYER COCKPIT WINDOWS

We are looking at the STATION. At the very edge of perception, we can see the red phaser beams from the TRIADS off to the right of the STATION.

SEVEN (v/o)

The projectile will strike the station any moment now, Captain.

Suddenly there is a bright but tiny blue-white flash from the right side of the station. A dim blue lens flare flashes out from the explosion like a shock wave. The entire right-hand half of the station crumples in upon itself. Massive red-yellow explosions tear through the STATION, totally destroying it.

JANEWAY (v/o)

[Aghast] Oh my God!

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

JANEWAY is horrified. Even SEVEN is amazed, but she has better self-control.

SEVEN

A cloaking device-equipped long-range strategic missile. Captain, this technology is not among my files on Destroyer tactical technology.

JANEWAY

[In a 'back to business' tone] Don't worry about it, Seven. It has been 200,000 years, after all. All ships to battle stations.

LIGHTS AND SOUNDS " RED ALERT

SEVEN

I am reading twenty plus transwarp egresses at 120 mark 045.

F/X " DEEP SPACE

Against the background of a distant emission nebula, a huge Destroyer fleet comes out of transwarp, their long spines folding out to flight position. There are two TIAMATS, eight HUNTER-class cruisers and twelve HAMMER-class destroyers. The HUNTERS are of a similar size to the TIAMATS, but only have one hull and their five spines are arranged symmetrically around their base. The HAMMERS are about a third the size of the TIAMATS (approximately the same size as a Sovereign-class starship).

INT. BRIDGE

Everyone is suddenly all business. Every eye is to their displays, every hand to their controls.

JANEWAY

Fleet to assume formation gamma. [Beat] Prepare to fire photon torpedoes, pattern alpha. [Beat] Fire!

F/X â€" IN ORBIT OF P'DAR II

The FLEET has formed a wall of ships in space. Every ship suddenly fires a group of between six and ten photon torpedoes of every colour of the rainbow.

New POV â€" The Destroyer fleet

The torpedoes shoot towards the fleet, now arranged in spherical groups around the two TIAMATS, which are flying side-by-side. Both TIAMATS fire their beam weapons, but instead of a single beam, there is a diffuse fan of energy that bears a passing resemblance to a tractor beam. When the torpedoes reach the energy 'fan' they all explode.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

JANEWAY seems to be displaying fury rather than anything else.

JANEWAY

[Angry] Damnation!

SEVEN

[Winces] Another new technology. I believe that my Borg records have reached the limit of their relevance, Captain.

JANEWAY

[Abrupt] Don't worry Seven! [Intense and quiet] We'll have to hit them at close range. [Beat, louder] All ships come to formation delta and close with the enemy at full impulse. Keep making random evasive dodges to reduce their chances of a long range hit. All fighters, let's take the fight to those horrors!

F/X â€" ORBIT OF P'DAR II

The fleet forms into five groups of ships, each arranged in such a way as a sudden evasive manoeuvre will not bring them too close to another. As the big ships accelerate forward, the fighters, led by the DELTA FLYER, dart from in between them and shoot away towards the enemy.

New POV â€" The Destroyer fleet

Black cylinders detach from around the bases of the TIAMATS and HUNTERS. As they move away from the capital ships, they break up into dozens of gnat-like objects. As they race forwards, we can see that they are hundreds of DARTS, RAMPAGES and DEVASTATORS. The Destroyer fighters and bombers begin to fire their pulse cannon.

FADE

ACT 5

F/X " DEEP SPACE

The VOYAGER races past at maximum warp.

INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

CHAKOTAY is reading a PADD. Camera circles around him as the log entry plays.

CHAKOTAY (v/o)

Ship's log, Stardate 53999.8: The _Voyager_ is now over two-thirds of the way through its voyage to rendezvous with Captain Janeway. Apart from diverting to intercept a Destroyer merchant convoy two days ago, we have managed to maintain an average speed of Warp 9.99; something that no Federation starship has ever achieved before. Even so, we cannot be re-united with the Captain too soon. While I have every faith in Captain Janeway's tactical and diplomatic abilities, I cannot help but wonder, and worry, at what she may be going through without the support of this ship and its crew.

SUDDEN CUT TO P'DAR SYSTEM

A Telay MANTA fighter shoots through the frame and is struck by a trio of electric-blue energy pulses. The small fighter explodes and a DART races past.

The POV, in a jerky, almost hand-held fashion, swings around to show the Alliance Fleet and a Destroyer fleet exchanging massive energy blasts. Meanwhile, fighters from both sides race to and fro, occasionally unleashing energy blasts against each other.

A TIAMAT fires its primary weapon, and an Alliance cruiser explodes into flame.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

JANEWAY is checking her displays urgently.

JANEWAY

[Firm] That's right, I said _closer_. They will pick us off a ship at a time with their main weapons if we don't get in so close that they can't shoot without hitting their own ships.

VOICE (v/o)

We won't last long against their pulse cannon!

JANEWAY

It's longer than we will last against that beam weapon!

SEVEN is checking one of her displays.

SEVEN

Captain, one of the Destroyer cruisers has moved away from its

escorts.

JANEWAY checks her own displays

JANEWAY

Janeway to Squadron 2. Target all fire on the cruiser at 244 mark 117 mark 8.

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

Six Alliance capital ships begin to fire their phasers and torpedoes.

New POV â€" A HUNTER begins to take hits. Its shields are far more powerful than any conventional starship, but no vessel can take this sort of punishment for long. Explosions begin to tear through its structure. Finally, it succumbs in an enormous yellow-white fireball.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

We can see the explosion outside the starboard windows. The CREW rock from the massive shock wave.

SEVEN

Captain, our losses are now over 50%. While we appear to be holding the Destroyers here, we cannot take these losses for much longer.

JANEWAY checks her displays.

JANEWAY

We need to break up their formation. [Touches a control] Fighter wings Gold, Red and Green form on the _Delta Flyer_. [Turns to MOGASU] Ensign, I want an evasive course right towards that lead Dreadnought.

MOGASU

You've got it, Captain.

JANEWAY

[Points forward] Engage!

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER and thirty FIGHTERS begin to swoop towards the lead TIAMAT.

New POV â€" Looking at the fighters from the left side

The fighters are swerving from side to side and up and down. DARTS and RAMPAGES blur past. Two Alliance fighters fall, then another four.

F/X â€" DELTA FLYER COCKPIT WINDOWS

The TIAMAT is growing larger and larger in the windows. It is putting out a hail of flak from its pulse cannon turrets. The view jerks as the DELTA FLYER takes a glancing blow.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

Several panels at the back spit sparks and the cabin lights dim for a moment.

CAREY

Shields down to 45%, Captain.

JANEWAY

Re-enforce them from auxiliary power, Joe. Seven, stand by all weapons.

NEELIX

Captain, the Destroyers have sent a squadron of their fighters to pursue us.

JANEWAY

I know, Neelix. Janeway to Green Wing. Fall back and engage those fighters. [Checks console] Janeway to Squadron 5, pull back and target the lead Dreadnought with a full torpedo spread.

NEELIX

[Puzzled] Um, Captain. That didn't work before.

JANEWAY smiles grimly.

JANEWAY

Watch and learn Mr. Neelix. [Touches control] Gold and Red Wings, engage the Dreadnought at point-blank range! Squadron 5, fire torpedoes

F/X " DEEP SPACE

We are looking back towards the P'Dar II. The remaining fifteen or so fighters break formation and begin to strafe the TIAMAT. In the background, we can see a dogfight developing between some Alliance fighters and a group of DARTS.

The TIAMAT does not take much damage, but the attention of its crew is now fixed entirely on the fighter attack. About 50 photon torpedoes swoop towards it from a distant sextet of Alliance capital ships.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

The ship shudders from another hit and one of the rear consoles explodes dramatically.

CAREY

Damn! That's it for the missile launchers Captain!

NEELIX

I'll secure those power lines!

NEELIX rises and attends to the exploded console.

SEVEN

Torpedo impact in 10 seconds Captain. Five seconds, fourâ€¦

JANEWAY

[Urgent] Janeway to Red and Gold wings: Break off! Get as much distance as you can from the Dreadnought!

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

The torpedoes streak in just as the fighters break off and flee. The TIAMAT begins to fire on the torpedoes, shooting a few (less than ten) down. Another torpedo hits a DART, destroying the fighter. The others detonate asymmetrically against the TIAMAT's shields. The lights of the big Dreadnought dim for a moment and one of the long 'spines' crumples and it begins to 'bleed' golden-white drive plasma.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

JANEWAY shakes her fist in triumph.

SEVEN

The shields of the Destroyer Dreadnought have collapsed. Captain, our losses are now at 65%. Shall I signal the retreat?

JANEWAY

[Angry] Hell no! Signal for reinforcements! [Touches a control] Janeway to Squadron 5. Close to attack range on the damaged Dreadnought and engage. All ships continue to engage at point-blank range!

SEVEN

[Urgent] Captain, our losses are becoming critical and we have yet to inflict more than 20% losses on the enemy. We should withdraw.

JANEWAY

[Firm] We fight, Seven. We have to defeat the Destroyers here or we will never seize the strategic initiative!

F/X â€" VIEW OUT OF DELTA FLYER COCKPIT WINDOWS

The DELTA FLYER is following a DART. The phasers fire several times

and the Destroyer fighter explodes. In the distance, we see a HAMMER destroyer explode into a massive fireball. To the left, a crystalline, octopus-like Telay cruiser explodes. We can clearly see several RAMPAGES and DEVESTATORS fleeing the explosion.

JANEWAY (v/o)

[Angry] Too many of their fighters are getting through. All fighters, disregard the enemy capital ships. Concentrate on the enemy fighters and attack vessels.

SEVEN (v/o)

Captain, I am reading a Destroyer bomber fleeing the battle zone. It is on course 110 mark 87, a direct heading for the P'Dar sun.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

JANEWAY twists in her seat to look at SEVEN.

JANEWAY

[Puzzled] Now, what the hell is happening? [Shakes head] It doesn't matter. Ensign, lay in a pursuit course. Mr. Carey, I will need those photon missile launchers back on-line.

CAREY shakes his head.

CAREY

There's no way I can do that, Ma'am. That last direct hit fused the launcher mechanisms. It will take a full shipyard to repair them.

JANEWAY

Do we have any missiles left in the loading racks, behind the tubes?

CAREY

[Confused] Yes, Ma'am.

JANEWAY

Then fire them manually and don't worry about the reload mechanism.

CAREY

[Appalled] Captain, that will wreck the launchers!

JANEWAY

[Faint smile] They were wrecked anyway, Mister.

F/X â€" P'DAR PRIME

A DEVESTATOR screams past towards the P'Dar sun at full power. As it fades into the distance, the DELTA FLYER roars past too.

F/X â€" VIEW FROM DELTA FLYER COCKPIT WINDOWS

The DEVESTATOR is dead centre of the view.

SEVEN (v/o)

We are now in missile range. Our four remaining missiles are locked on and ready for manual firing.

JANEWAY (v/o)

Fire missiles!

F/X â€" DEEP SPACE

Two massive blooms of fire blossom out from either side of the DELTA FLYER, just aft of the cockpit windows. Four green photon missiles streak away.

F/X â€" VIEW FROM DELTA FLYER COCKPIT WINDOWS

The missiles shoot away. After a moment, they reach the DEVESTATOR and explode. The bomber tumbles end-over-end. The DELTA FLYER catches up _very_ fast

JANEWAY (v/o)

Evade!

The view suddenly lurches to the right

F/X â€" P'DAR PRIME

The DELTA FLYER curves away to the right as the DEVESTATOR explodes.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

Several panels are wrecked and a cable trunk has collapsed above JANEWAY's seat. Many of the display screens show only static.

CAREY

[Quiet and accusing] We've lost our tactical array, Captain. The missile launch has torn two holes in our hull and I wouldn't like to stress the hull plates any more unless you want to swim back to P'Dar II.

JANEWAY

[Furious] Damn!

SEVEN's console begins to bleep.

SEVEN

Captain, I have detected a single projectile, apparently launched by the Destroyer bomber, approaching the P'Dar sun.

JANEWAY

Can we intercept it?

SEVEN shakes her head.

SEVEN

It is already too late; the projectile has entered the Chromosphere.

F/X " SURFACE OF P'DAR PRIME

The PROJECTILE zips vertically downwards and into the surface of the sun. After a moment, clear shock waves begin to radiate from the impact point.

INT. DELTA FLYER COCKPIT

SEVEN is watching her console with a worried expression. She does not understand what she is seeing.

SEVEN

Captain. [Beat] If our sensors are functioning correctly, there has been a 3,000% increase in output by the P'Dar sun. I am reading the sort of fusion reactions, Helium to Nitrogen and Nitrogen to Carbon, which normally occur only in much older suns of a different spectral type.

JANEWAY

Let me see it, Seven.

JANEWAY watches her own console.

JANEWAY

[Disbelieving] My God, I'm seeing Nitrogen to Iron reactions! This isn't possible! [Long Pause, Horrified] Merciful God, no! [Touches control] All ships! Break off. Get out of the system at _maximum warp_! Now!

SEVEN

Captain, the Destroyers are jamming all frequencies. We are too far from the fleet to penetrate the field. [Console screeches] I am reading a high neutrino flux! [Beat, Amazed] Supernova underway!

JANEWAY

Ensign, align us radially away from the sun and go to maximum warp!

F/X " P'DAR PRIME

The DELTA FLYER accelerates to warp just as the P'Dar sun turns into an enormous blue-white explosion.

New POV, near P'Dar II

The battle is still raging. The Destroyers have withdrawn away from P'Dar II and are fighting defensively, keeping the Alliance vessels away from them, but making no effort to advance. The fighting continues for approximately a minute. We see various engagements from various angles. Although the Alliance ships are coming out worst, the Destroyers are not pushing their advantage.

Suddenly, the Destroyer fleet suddenly breaks off and begins to flee. Undamaged ships towing damaged ones, and they go to transwarp. The few survivors of the Alliance fleet mill about in confusion. Behind them, the sun begins to swell, its yellow surface growing brighter and blue-white. Suddenly it collapses inwards, growing brighter every moment and turns into an enormous explosion that fills the view.

Those vessels still capable of warp shoot away as a sharp-edged shock wave spreads out from the sun. In about twenty seconds, the radiation wave reaches the planet, turning it into a dead ringer for a comet, enormous radiation fluxes turning its atmosphere and oceans into a million-kilometre long tail of plasma and gas. The cataclysm catches several Alliance ships and they are either smashed or swept away like motes of dust. Ten seconds after that, the main shock wave arrives, stripping the upper layers of the planet's surface away and into the 'tail.' After a few seconds, the tortured remains of P'Dar II explodes into rubble. No space vessel has lasted this long.

F/X " INTERSTELLAR SPACE

The DELTA FLYER is fleeing at maximum warp. In the background we can see the bright flash of the P'Dar Supernova. A distortion wave (SUBSPACE SHOCKWAVE) flashes past, shaking the DELTA FLYER

INT. COCKPIT

The blast shakes everyone. Several consoles spit sparks and go dark. JANEWAY is in shock.

JANEWAY

[Quiet and horrified] A supernova-generating missile! Isn't there anything those living nightmares can't do?

SEVEN

Captain, I have just detected eight Destroyer medium fighters on an intercept heading.

CAREY

Captain, our tactical array is still off-line. We won't restore phaser capability for hours, even if we start now. Our shields are so weak, they might as well be off-line.

JANEWAY sits as if frozen in place, her face pale. NEELIX puts his hand on her shoulder and shakes gently.

NEELIX

What do you want to do, Captain?

JANEWAY shakes herself.

JANEWAY

Ensign Mogasu, plot a new heading away from the Destroyer vessels. Change your heading every few minutes. Apart from that, concentrate on keeping ahead of them.

MOGASU is sweaty and nervous.

MOGASU

Yes Ma'am

F/X " DEEP SPACE

The DELTA FLYER shoots past. A few seconds later, a tight formation of DARTS races past in pursuit

CONTINUITY

To be continued next time on Star Trek " Voyager!

End
file.